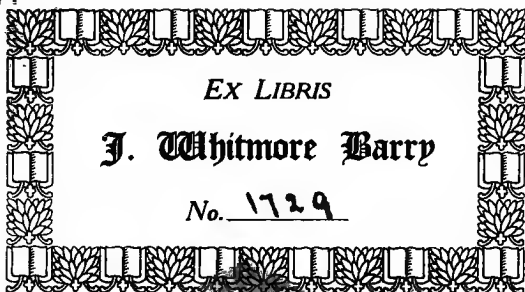


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AT THE BARN

ANTHONY F. WHARTON

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AT THE BARN:  
AN IDYLL IN THREE ACTS  
BY ANTHONY P. WHARTON



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This play was produced for the first time on April 11th,  
1912, at the Prince of Wales' Theatre.

## THE PEOPLE.

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MR. KENNETH MAXWELL.—*A Novelist.*

MR. JAMES B. CRANE.—*An Artist.*

MR. WILLIAM LEWIS.—*A Journalist.*

KNOWLES.—*A Servant.*

MR. JULIUS STEIN.—*A Financier.*

THE RT. HON. LORD CLONBARRY.

—*A Rather Good Sort, Really.*

MR. ALBERT AKERMANN.—*A Golden Youth.*

MISS GRACE TREVELYAN.—*An Actress.*

MISS LINDA MOORE.—*An Actress.*

MISS EUPHEMIA HAWES.—*An Earnest Christian.*

MISS LILIAN BLAIR.—*An Actress.*

*N.B.—Application should be made to the Publisher for right of  
AMATEUR PERFORMANCE.*





# AT THE BARN.

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## ACT I.

*The scene represents the sitting-room at "The Barn," Mr. Kenneth Maxwell's house near Etterby, a small village about ten miles from Southampton. A rather untidy but comfortable man's room, littered with hats, pipes, newspapers, golf-clubs and other miscellaneous masculine belongings. On a table at the left is a very handsome sunshade.*

*The time is about five o'clock on an afternoon in June of the present year.*

KNOWLES, *a stolid-looking man-servant with a certain unmistakable suggestion of the old soldier about his shoulders and his air and manner generally, is hovering about the room in obvious uneasiness. He goes to the door leading to the hall, listens rather anxiously, comes back, picks up the sunshade, looks at it with pursed lips, carries it to the door and stands there, listening indecisively. He turns towards the window as a voice is heard outside.*

CRANE (*outside the window, calling plaintively*). Knowles! Kno . . . wells! Kno . . . o . . . wells!

KNOWLES (*guiltily dropping the sunshade*). Yes, Sir. Yes, Mr. Crane.

CRANE (*coming in by the window, large, hot, tweed-clad, burdened with golf clubs*). Oh, there you are! A drink, Knowles, an' you love me! A big, wet, cold— (*He pauses as he perceives the sunshade on the floor.*) Where the . . . What the devil is that?

## AT THE BARN.

KNOWLES (*nervously*). That, Sir? That's a sunshade, Sir.

CRANE (*after a moment's stolid contemplation of his face*). Thank you, Knowles. So it is. (*Stooping to pick up the sunshade.*) Yours, Knowles?

LEWIS *comes in by the window*; small, fat, hot, tweed-clad, burdened with golf clubs.

KNOWLES. No, Sir.

CRANE. No?

LEWIS (*seeing the sunshade*). What the . . . What the devil is that?

CRANE. That? That's a sunshade, Billy . . . a lady's sunshade.

LEWIS (*severely*). Knowles, what is the meaning of this?

KNOWLES. Of what, Sir?

LEWIS. Don't prevaricate, Knowles. Are we to believe that here . . . here in this chaste apartment you have taken advantage of our absence on the links to wallow in the mire of some hideous intrigue?

KNOWLES. I beg your pardon, Mr. Lewis, but I never wallowed in my life, Sir . . . neither in intrigues nor otherwise. (*Going towards door.*)

CRANE. There, there, Knowles. Mr. Lewis is only chaffing.

KNOWLES. Perhaps so, Sir. But wallow is an unpleasant word, Sir . . . an unbecoming word, Sir . . . if I may say so, Sir, a lascivious word. What did you say you'd drink, Sir?

CRANE. I think a gin and stone-ginger, Knowles. . . . Yes. On the whole . . . a gin and stone-ginger.

KNOWLES. Yes, Sir. And you, Mr. Lewis?

LEWIS. Two gins and two stone-gingers. I am not above wallowing.

KNOWLES. No, Sir. Yes, Sir.

MAXWELL *comes in by the window*; tall, hot, tweed-clad, burdened with golf clubs. *Between thirty-five and forty.*

Very well, Sir. (*Going towards door.*)

CRANE. Don't go for a moment, Knowles. You haven't told us whose property this is.

MAXWELL (*coming forward*). What is? (*As he sees the sunshade.*) What the . . . what the devil is that?

CRANE. That? That is a sunshade.

## AT THE BARN.

LEWIS. A sunshade.

CRANE *and* LEWIS (*in hideous duet*). A lady's sunshade.

MAXWELL. You idiots. (*Glancing about.*) And the lady of whom that is the sunshade? (*He fixes his eyes on KNOWLES.*)

CRANE. Aye, Knowles. Where is she?

LEWIS. Oh, wallow, wallow, wallow, Knowles, where is she?

KNOWLES (*to MAXWELL*). The lady is upstairs, Sir . . . in your room.

MAXWELL (*frowning*). In my room?

KNOWLES. Yes, Sir. Washing her hands and tidying her hair, Sir.

MAXWELL. Her hair? With my brushes?

LEWIS. Oh, wallow, wallow, wallow!

CRANE. Who tossed her hair, Knowles?

MAXWELL. Do be quiet, children (*To KNOWLES*) Who is the lady?

KNOWLES. I never saw her before, Sir. I enquired her name, but she said it didn't matter . . . that she didn't know either you, Sir, or Mr. Crane . . . or even Mr. Lewis.

CRANE. "Even" is good.

LEWIS. Thank you, Knowles.

MAXWELL (*visibly annoyed*). Then why did you allow her to go upstairs? Why did you allow her into the house? What sort of a person is she?

KNOWLES. Well, Sir . . . she . . . well, if I may so express myself, Sir. . . she matches the sunshade, Sir.

MAXWELL (*looking at the sunshade rather grimly*). Oh, does she? Fluffy?

KNOWLES. Yes, Sir. (*Groans from CRANE and LEWIS.*)

MAXWELL. Frilly.

KNOWLES. As far as I could judge, Sir. (*Renewed groans.*)

MAXWELL. Frivolous?

KNOWLES. A little on that side, Sir.

(*Renewed groans.*)

MAXWELL. Young?

KNOWLES. Yes, Sir.

MAXWELL. Pretty?

KNOWLES. I should say extremely beautiful, Sir.

## AT THE BARN.

MAXWELL (*turning to the others, who have abandoned themselves to attitudes of dejection*). Good God! This is awful. (*A pause.*) (*He sits down.*) Washing her hands and tidying her hair . . . in my room!

KNOWLES. I showed the lady into the spare room, Sir, but she insisted on going into all the others.

CRANE. Naturally.

KNOWLES. In the end she selected yours, Sir . . . she said she preferred your soap.

CRANE. How rude of her!

LEWIS. Awful cheek, *I* think.

MAXWELL. How long has she been up there?

KNOWLES. About twenty minutes, Sir.

MAXWELL. Well . . . will you go to her and say that . . . that . . . we . . . ? (*He turns questioningly to the others.*)

CRANE (*firmly*). You.

LEWIS. Rather. You.

MAXWELL. Very well, then. That I am at her disposal as soon as it may be her pleasure to honour me with her company.

CRANE. And soft discourse.

LEWIS (*as KNOWLES goes out*). And prithee, good Knowles, bid her bustle . . . Dost hear me?

KNOWLES (*at the door, with elaborate sarcasm*). I hear you, my lord. (*They all laugh as he goes out.*)

MAXWELL. A remarkably cool young woman, whoever she is.

CRANE (*to MAXWELL*). Hope she hasn't noticed those sketches of mine on your walls, Kenneth, old chap.

LEWIS (*to MAXWELL*). Or those new pyjamas of yours, old chap.

MAXWELL. And I hope I don't look as offensively hot and dirty as you two do . . . Billy, you really might do something with your face . . . the gleam of it is positively painful. (*As he speaks he has mechanically taken a masher from CRANE'S bag and begins to play little wrist shots with it.*) That's a lovely little club, Jimbi.

CRANE (*interested at once*). It is a nice little club.

MAXWELL. Make 'em talk with that, eh?

LEWIS. Bit heavy in the heel, isn't it?

CRANE. Think so?

## AT THE BARN.

LEWIS (*taking the club*). Show me.

*They are standing more or less absorbed in LEWIS'S performance with the club when the door re-opens, and KNOWLES appears.*

MAXWELL (*a little impatiently*). I wish this dash woman would buck up. She . . .

*He turns to find that LILLAH has entered the room and now stands, a smile parting her lips, looking at him.*

KNOWLES. Er . . . the lady, Sir.

*They stare at her in silence for a moment. She looks from face to face with a smile somewhat defiant but wholly charming. Her hat and frock, obviously designed for motoring needs, are the very last hat and frock thought of. She is twenty-three, radiantly pretty and healthy. Her eyes fix themselves on MAXWELL, whose expression is, if possible, a little more grim and glacial than those of his two friends.*

LILLAH. Gracious! You all do look cross. Don't you like me?

MAXWELL (*icily*). Does it matter?

LILLAH (*a little taken aback, frowning involuntarily*). Of course not. (*Recovering her smile.*) But everybody likes me. Why shouldn't you?

MAXWELL (*gravely to CRANE*). Do you know, Jimbi?

CRANE (*gravely*). Not in the least.

LILLAH. Jimbi! What a funny name! What's the name of the nice little fat one? Ask him.

MAXWELL. Billy, do you know why we should not like this lady?

LEWIS. Everybody else does.

LILLAH. Quite right. Full marks, Billy.

LEWIS. You're sure you know me well enough to call me Billy?

LILLAH. Quite. But your nose is *too* shiny. Do rub it in something.

MAXWELL (*to LEWIS severely*). I told you.

LILLAH. Billy and Jimbi. (*To MAXWELL*) And you . . . what is your name?

MAXWELL. Maxwell. Kenneth Maxwell.

## AT THE BARN.

LILLAH. No pet name? (MAXWELL *very nearly scowls*. To CRANE). Jimbi, what is Mr. Maxwell's pet name?

CRANE. In moments of extreme daring we sometimes call him Kenneth . . . but he doesn't like it.

LILLAH. Doesn't like being petted? (*With a mocking sigh*.) What a pity! (*She laughs outright as MAXWELL, a little ruffled, turns away from her*.) Though, indeed, I gathered as much from his room. Such a grim, hard, tidy, uncomfortable room . . . like a monk's cell—except for the pictures. I took down all your pictures, Mr. Maxwell. You don't mind, do you?

MAXWELL. Not in the least.

LILLAH. You see, they clashed with all the rest of the room, somehow. I'm sure (*to CRANE*) they're awfully clever . . . you know . . .

CRANE. Oh, yes. They are. I know. I did them.

LILLAH. Really! How hateful of you! They're horrid! Ugly, cruel . . . I hate ugly, cruel things . . . I'm sure you're an ugly, cruel old thing yourself. (*She laughs again as he opens his eyes at her just a trifle wickedly*.) No one has asked me to sit down. May I?

CRANE and LEWIS *simultaneously make for the nearest chair to her, a small, light basket chair*.

LILLAH. I'm quite sure one of you could lift that chair, you know.

(*They both let go.*)

LILLAH (*laughing again as they stand in silence*). Well . . . which?

*She turns away, too amused to look at them. Each seizes the chair. They glare at one another.*

CRANE, *in his endeavour to wrest the chair from LEWIS, who holds on gamely, shakes him, and the chair, as a terrier shakes a rat.*

LILLAH (*delighted*). Mr. Maxwell, do give me a chair . . . there . . . that one . . . that's a nice comfy one.

MAXWELL *silently gets her the chair she has indicated.*

LEWIS (*at length abandoning the chair, CRANE having released his hold, sotto voce*). Not damn likely, old chap!

LILLAH. I suppose I ought to explain.

MAXWELL (*with raised eyebrows*). Explain?

LILLAH (*with an airy little gesture*). Oh . . . how I

## AT THE BARN.

come to be here . . . and who I am . . . and all that . . . Do you want to know who I am? Anyone?

MAXWELL, CRANE and LEWIS (*with elaborate indifference*). No.

LILLAH (*a little nettled*). I'm glad. Because . . . well, if you knew who I really was . . . you *might* disapprove of me. You see . . . I'm a notorious character.

CRANE (*blandly*). We don't mind in the least. We're all more or less notorious characters ourselves.

LILLAH (*quickly*). Are you? What have you done?

CRANE. Well . . . Mr. Maxwell has written some good books, which no one has ever read . . . and one rotten one. which everyone has read. I expect you've read it too.

LILLAH. What's its name?

CRANE. "The Cattleman."

LILLAH. That horrible book! (*To MAXWELL.*) Did you write that?

MAXWELL. My sin has found me out.

LILLAH. Oh! (*She looks at him meditatively for a moment.*) Then you're K. S. A. Maxwell?

MAXWELL. This is it.

LILLAH. Quite a celebrity. (*After another little stare. To CRANE.*) And you . . . You paint. What's your name?

CRANE. Austin Crane.

LILLAH. The poster man?

CRANE (*nodding*). Ah-ha.

LILLAH (*to LEWIS*). And you?

LEWIS. I do nothing, dear lady. I content myself with censuring the evil deeds of others in the columns of a highly respectable journal known as "The Onlooker." My name is Lewis . . . and I have more enemies, in print, than any Minister of the existing Government.

LILLAH. Gracious! I've strayed into a nice old menagerie . . .

MAXWELL. Yes, indeed. And now I really think you might at least tell us your front name . . . as some clue to your general character.

LILLAH (*after a moment's reflection*). All right. Lillah. What do you make out of that?

MAXWELL. I should say an excellent disposition,

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hampered by an overpowering shyness and diffidence, especially in the presence of the other sex . . . kind to animals . . .

LILLAH (*laughing*). Provided they don't snarl or growl at me. (*To CRANE.*) Jimbi. I can see you distinctly out of the corner of my eye. I know you're drawing me.

CRANE (*who has been making a surreptitious sketch of LILLAH's head on a sheet of notepaper*). Very rude of me, I'm sure.

LILLAH. Abominably. But why not make yourself comfortable and do the job properly?

CRANE. Thank you. I'm quite happy, if you are. At least, I should be if I might smoke.

LILLAH. Don't be absurd! Of course.

(*CRANE lights a cigarette and goes on with his sketch.*)

LEWIS (*who has been staring at LILLAH fixedly*). I say . . . ah . . . Lillah.

LILLAH. Yes, Billy?

LEWIS. You know, I'm morally certain that we have met before.

LILLAH (*with assumed indifference*). Indeed? Perhaps. I meet a great many people. (*She turns her head slightly.*)

CRANE (*sharply*). Keep your head quiet, please.

LILLAH (*with some hauteur*). I beg your pardon?

CRANE (*nothing abashed*). Kindly keep your head quiet.

LILLAH (*amused, despite herself*). Sweet creature! What was I looking at? Oh, yes . . . Mr. Maxwell's chin. (*Fixing her eyes on the chin.*) That right?

(*CRANE grunts and goes on with his sketch.*)

MAXWELL. It's a curious thing that I too have a vague belief that I have met you, or at any rate seen you somewhere before.

LILLAH. Really, Mr. Maxwell?

MAXWELL (*meeting her eyes*). Really . . . Lillah.

LILLAH (*quickly*). Oh, I don't think I can allow you to call me Lillah. Only Billy. You and Jimbi are too dangerous.

LEWIS (*indignantly*). I should like to state at once, in justice to myself, that your confidence in me is entirely



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misplaced. When I've got a clean collar on, and my hair is brushed, I'm as dangerous as any man living.

LILLAH. You mustn't harbour any evil designs on me, though, Billy. I'm some one else's property.

*She flashes a little quick look at MAXWELL'S face. He is apparently absorbed in the contemplation of sundry welts on the fingers of his left hand. There is dead silence for an appreciable time. None of them looks at her. She smiles a little wistfully.*

(After a pause). I suppose all of you are, too?

MAXWELL. No. None of us.

LILLAH. Three gay and giddy bachelors? No one engaged even——? (*They shake their heads in silence.*) (To MAXWELL). You live here always?

MAXWELL. I live here for the greater part of the year. These two scoundrels come along occasionally to disturb my peace of mind . . . but they never stay long.

LILLAH. Why?

LEWIS. Because we're afraid of wanting to stay here for ever. Isn't that right, Jimbi?

CRANE. That's quite right, Billy.

LILLAH. You know . . . I feel like that already. It's an extraordinary thing to say, I suppose . . . but I really do feel as if I should like to stay here for ever. (*Laughing at their rather puzzled stare.*) Don't be frightened, Mr. Maxwell . . . I'm not fishing for an invitation. But . . . (*she rises*) Oh . . . I can't explain . . . you wouldn't understand. It's so peaceful here . . . so cut off from everything . . . everything ugly . . . (*She goes to the window and stands looking out, her back to them. After a moment.*) How far is it from here to Southampton?

MAXWELL. About ten miles.

(*There is another brief silence.*)

LILLAH. What a lovely old garden you have! It really is an old garden, isn't it?

MAXWELL. Yes. The Rector here is a bit of an anti-quary, and he tells me that this house was built somewhere around the year 1790, on the site of an older house

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which dated from Queen Anne's reign. The date on the sundial in the garden is 1712.

LILLAH (*eagerly*). I love the sundial!

CRANE. I wish you'd come back and sit down . . . You've only got one eye at present.

LILLAH (*apparently unhearing*). I love it . . . and I hate it. (*Coming away from the window.*) All the years it has seen the roses fade and the summer go . . . Nearly two hundred years . . . All the people . . . Ugh! (*She shivers a little, and reseats herself.*) Give me my other eye, Jimbi.

LEWIS (*plaintively*). I don't like you to be sad, Lillah. When you're sa-ad you're awfully sa-a-ad.

LILLAH (*laughing*). I'm sorry. Give me a cigarette, someone, to cheer me up.

LEWIS *gives her a cigarette.* MAXWELL *makes no effort to forestall him.* CRANE *leans back from his sketch with a gesture of despair.*

LILLAH (*to LEWIS*). Thank you. (*As she lights her cigarette.*) Do you ever go up to town, Mr. Maxwell?

MAXWELL. Occasionally. I spent three whole days there last month.

LILLAH. Go to any of the theatres?

MAXWELL. Yes.

LILLAH. Which? Let me guess. Serious drama, of course. Where is there serious drama to be seen in London at present?

MAXWELL. Nowhere for long. No. We went to enjoy ourselves . . . some musical comedy or other . . . I forget the name . . . something about a chauffeur.

LEWIS. "The Princess and the Shover."

CRANE. Awful blither!

LEWIS. Fearful rot!

MAXWELL. Absolute drivel! Old plot, old tunes, old jokes . . . but we enjoyed it beyond measure.

LEWIS. There was one awful clever little girl—one of the Princess's ladies-in-waiting. What was her name?

MAXWELL. Oh, don't ask me. She was clever, though. (*To LILLAH*). Quite a minor part, you know—but remarkably clever.

LILLAH. Pretty?

MAXWELL. Um. Yes. Well made up, at any rate.

## AT THE BARN.

LILLAH (*quickly*). She doesn't make up much . . . you're quite mistaken. (*Checking herself*.) At least, so they say.

MAXWELL (*indifferent*). Perhaps not. There's a photograph of her in this week's "Sketch" . . . if you care to see it.

LILLAH. Good?

MAXWELL (*rising lazily*). Oh, the usual thing. Affected pose, to display hair, neck and arms, inane smile to display teeth . . . general expression of kittenish imbecility. (*Looking round for the "Sketch."*)

LILLAH (*icily*). Oh, thank you . . . don't bother. It wouldn't interest me in the least. (*To CRANE*.) Have you nearly finished, Jimbi? . . . I must run away now.

CRANE. Another five minutes.

LILLAH (*reluctantly*). Very well. But do hurry.

LEWIS. Are you going away?

LILLAH. Of course.

LEWIS. Without telling us why you came?

LILLAH. There was no why. It happened . . . that's all. I can't tell you why. I can tell you how, if you care to hear.

LEWIS. We should love to.

LILLAH. Well . . . I was going along a hot, dusty, tiresome old road, in a hot, dusty, tiresome old motor-car, with three other hot, dusty, tiresome old people . . . going from a tiresome old place called Southampton to a still more tiresome old place called London . . . at forty miles an hour or so . . . when . . . by the grace of heaven, something went wrong with the works . . . and I came here instead. That's how.

MAXWELL. Surely not quite. One can't see the house from the main road, you know.

LILLAH. No. While Cec—while they were trying to settle the car, I went for a little walk all by myself along the road. I went along and along, and I came to a stile. I got over the stile, and I came on a mysterious little path winding in and out under lovely shady trees . . . I went along and along, and I came to a wicket gate. There was "Private" written on the gate . . . so I opened it and went in . . . and I found myself in the most beautiful garden I had ever seen. I walked around the

## AT THE BARN.

garden . . . and I didn't steal anything. I walked out of the garden through another wicket gate, along another path under more trees, and I came to a house . . . such a calm, peaceful, sleepy, friendly-looking old house. Says I to myself, Isn't this just scrumshus! Who lives here, I wonder? I tried to behave myself . . . but I couldn't. I came up the steps, knocked, interviewed a dear of a man-servant . . . found out that the master of the house was a Mr. Maxwell, who was likely to return from the golf-links at any moment . . . determined to see what Mr. Maxwell was like . . . bluffed Mr. Maxwell's man . . . and you know the rest . . . That's how.

MAXWELL. And your friends?

LILLAH. I suppose they're still tinkering at that wretched car. (*Yawning faintly.*) Oh . . . they'll find me. They always do . . . unfortunately.

MAXWELL. You evidently don't think that there is any danger of their going on their way without you.

LILLAH. I'm afraid not. Oh . . . (*eagerly*) wouldn't it be jolly if they did! If they didn't see the stile! Even if they do see it, they will probably never dream of crossing it. Then they'll never find me.

MAXWELL. And you?

LILLAH. Oh . . . I shall stay here . . . just for a little while . . . until I get tired of the roses and the sundial and . . . the menagerie . . . Won't that be nice?

LEWIS. Awfully!

CRANE (*putting down his pencil*). Thank you.

LILLAH. Finished? (*Rising.*) May I see? (*She goes behind him.*) Oh. (*She stares at the sketch in silence. Then pats him on the shoulder.*) That's good.

*The others come across to look at the drawing.*

LEWIS. Ja, mein freund, das ist gut.

MAXWELL. Ja, ja. Gut. Sehr gut.

LILLAH. Am I quite as . . . as . . . hardy . . . as that?

CRANE (*simply*). I don't know. That is how you looked . . . then. Your face changes a great deal. I can't quite make you out.

LILLAH (*a little confused by the three pairs of eyes which regard her gravely*). Why do you all stare at me

## AT THE BARN.

so? (*She turns away from them, looks back sideways at them, turns away again.*) Gracious! You don't think I was in earnest about . . . about staying here . . . and all that?

MAXWELL. Personally, I never suspected for a moment that you were.

LILLAH (*calmly*). Suppose I were?

MAXWELL. Suppose you were? (*There is a silence.*)

LILLAH. Just suppose.

MAXWELL. Frankly . . . I couldn't.

LILLAH (*suddenly serious*). Suppose I wanted to escape . . . to get away from something horrid . . . Suppose I told you that I believed that I was meant to . . . to cross that stile? What would you do then?

MAXWELL. I think I should probably send Knowles in search of your friends.

LILLAH (*passionately*). They're not my friends . . . I hate them. I hate them . . .

*There is an uncomfortable silence. LILLAH goes to the window and stands with her back towards them. CRANE shakes his head sardonically. LEWIS carefully unties and reties the lace of one of his shoes. After a moment, MAXWELL rises and goes towards LILLAH. She turns.*

LILLAH. Well?

MAXWELL (*formally*). My dear lady, we should only be too delighted and too honoured if . . . if you could possibly remain here.

LILLAH. What a fib!

MAXWELL. I feel bound to point out to you, however, that the only feminine thing in the house is a cat . . . and we've given *her* notice. We could, of course, keep her on . . . but she's a very disreputable person indeed . . . I fear quite incapable of properly appreciating the duties of a chaperon.

LILLAH. I don't want a chaperon. I . . . I never have a chaperon. (*Abruptly.*) Where is the nearest laundry? Southampton?

MAXWELL. Winchester.

LILLAH. You send your things there?

MAXWELL. Yes. (*A pause.*)

LILLAH. I eat very little.

## AT THE BARN.

MAXWELL (*repressing a smile*). Indeed? I'm sorry to hear that.

CRANE *buries his face in his hands*. LEWIS *furtively reaches over and kicks his shin*.

LILLAH (*after a moment*). I shouldn't worry you. I should keep out of your way. If you wished it, I should never speak to you . . . at least, very little.

MAXWELL (*exasperated*). Will you have the goodness to tell me . . . (*Explosively*) Where do your parents live?

LILLAH. Why?

MAXWELL. Because I'm going to send them a wire to come along and fetch you home, and give you a good smacking.

LILLAH (*smiling a little dully*). My father and mother are both dead. The only relative that I have, to my knowledge, is an aunt who lives in Edinburgh; she's nearly seventy . . . so I think that I am likely to remain unsmacked.

MAXWELL (*utterly defeated, between his teeth as he turns away from her*). I've a jolly good mind to do the job myself.

LILLAH (*quickly*). What's that? What did you say?

MAXWELL. Nothing. (*A pause*.)

LILLAH. I sing and I play . . . if you care about that, (*A pause*.) I'm fairly useful at golf. (*Simultaneously they all look at her with renewed interest*.) (*Smiling*.) That has touched a sympathetic chord.

CRANE. What's your handicap?

LILLAH. Six. What are the links like here, by the way?

LEWIS. Not bad. On the short side, but fairly sporting.

LILLAH. Eighteen holes?

LEWIS. Yes. (*A pause*.)

LILLAH. Just for a little bit. A few weeks . . . a fortnight. (*A pause*.)

LILLAH. I can't cook . . . but I can sew on buttons. (*A pause*.) Well? No?

MAXWELL. I'm afraid it must be No.

LILLAH (*with a little sharp intake of her breath*). Very well. Will you give me that drawing, Jimbi?

CRANE. I'd rather not.

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LILLAH (*with a toss of her head and a defiant little laugh*). Nothing! . . . You won't have any truck with me, won't you? Well. (*Going to pick up her sunshade.*) Oh! . . . here's the "Sketch." . . . (*She opens the newspaper and runs through its pages until she comes on a full-page photograph. Holding the page open, she goes across to CRANE and lays the newspaper on the table beside the drawing.*) I prefer the photograph, Jimbi . . . even though Mr. Maxwell disapproves of its kittenish imbecility.

CRANE (*staring at the photograph in silence for a moment. Reading*). "Miss Lillian Blair, who will play 'Poor Miss Plantagenet' at the Frivolity." H'm. That's very nice—very nice indeed. Gentlemen, we've been entertaining an angel unawares, it seems.

LEWIS (*who has come to peep over CRANE'S shoulder*). I knew we had met before, Lillah. Come over here, Maxwell.

MAXWELL (*rising and going towards the table. After a glance from the photograph to LILLAH.*) This is dreadful . . . However . . . I retract nothing, Miss Blair.

LILLAH. No. You wouldn't. (*Turning away from them.*) So now you know who I am . . . tra-la-la. It's a funny world . . . a funny world . . .

(*The door opens and KNOWLES appears. He comes forward with an expression of some doubt to LILLAH.*)

KNOWLES. Two gentlemen wish to speak to you, madam.

LILLAH (*with a grimace*). Oh! I'm found. (*After a moment's hesitation.*) Thank you.

MAXWELL (*to LILLAH*). Shall I . . . (*To KNOWLES.*) Where are the gentlemen?

KNOWLES. On the lawn, Sir. I asked them to come in, Sir . . . but they said they would wait outside.

LILLAH (*after a moment*). Well . . . I suppose I must go. (*She stands, staring at the carpet, her fingers twisting nervously at her breast. She goes a little way towards the door. Stopping vehemently.*) No, no! I can't, I can't!

*She flings herself into a chair and hides her face in her hands. KNOWLES stares impassively at nothing.*

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MAXWELL (*in an undertone, to CRANE and LEWIS*). Good my masters, what have we here? (*Very gravely to KNOWLES.*) Ask these gentlemen if they will kindly come in for a moment.

KNOWLES. Yes, Sir.

*He goes out.* MAXWELL strolls over and stands looking out of the window. - As he passes LILLAH, she gives him a glance out of one tear-stained eye, then buries her face, with a sob, in her hands again. LEWIS fidgets with a book. CRANE draws arabesques on the table-cloth. After a few moments the door re-opens, and KNOWLES re-appears, ushering in LORD CLONBARRY and MR. JULIUS STEIN. CLONBARRY is about thirty-five, tall, fair, slim, good-looking, in a dissipated way, insouciant of manner, faultlessly attired for the road; he speaks with a slight drawl. STEIN is about forty-eight, short, stout, florid, noisy, rather over-dressed.

KNOWLES. Lord Clonbarry. (*To STEIN.*) What name did you say, Sir?

STEIN. Mr. Stein.

KNOWLES. Mr. Stein.

CLONBARRY (*to MAXWELL, who has turned at their entry*). Mr. Maxwell?

MAXWELL. Yes.

CLONBARRY. I hope you'll forgive this—this intrusion—Ah, there's the deserter! (*To LILLAH*). Where on earth have you been all this time, you bad girl?

STEIN. A pretty chase we've had after you. Got chased ourselves too. (*To MAXWELL, CRANE and LEWIS generally.*) Got into a field, thinking that Miss Blair might have strayed in there to gather buttercups and things . . . and found a bull. Damme, I never had such a narrow squeak of it in my life. We only got over the gate in time. (*MAXWELL and the others listen stolidly.*)

CLONBARRY (*who has gone over to LILLAH*). Anything the matter, Lillums?

LILLAH (*without looking up*). No.

CLONBARRY. Sure? Let me see. (*Attempting to raise her face.*)

LILLAH (*petulantly, putting his hands away*). No, no.



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Please leave me alone. (*She raises herself a little in her chair, but looks at no one.*)

STEIN. Ho-ho! Ho-ho! (*Winking at MAXWELL.*)  
This infernal heat, you know. Gets on one's nerves.

LILLAH (*listlessly*). Where's Grace?

CLONBARRY. We had to leave her in the car. Her shoes weren't made to walk in. I expect she's in a state by this time. (*To MAXWELL.*) We had a break-down . . . Miss Blair has probably told you?

MAXWELL. Yes. Fixed things up all right?

CLONBARRY. Oh, yes, thanks . . . it was nothing very serious. (*To LILLAH, off whom he has never taken his eyes.*) Is Mr. Maxwell . . . (*To MAXWELL.*) You have met Miss Blair before?

MAXWELL. No . . . I regret.

CLONBARRY (*puzzled, controlling his obvious curiosity*). Indeed? I fancied perhaps you had. She seems so—so very much at home here. (*To LILLAH.*) Well, young woman, if you're ready, I think we ought to make a start. Otherwise you won't get down to the theatre by a quarter past eight . . . unless you cut out dinner. It's after five o'clock now.

LILLAH. I'm not going to the theatre to-night.

CLONBARRY (*after a moment of surprise*). Not? Do you feel done up . . . or anything? (*Gently.*)

LILLAH. No. But I'm not going to the theatre to-night. Grace can do the part to-night. She's quite ready.

CLONBARRY. But—my dear Lord . . .!

LILLAH (*with determination*). Now, please don't worry me, Cecil. I mean it. I'm not going to the theatre to-night. I'm not going back in your car, either.

CLONBARRY. Oh, the car's all right . . . you needn't be afraid.

LILLAH. Oh . . . it's not that . . . I . . . I'm not going back to town with you.

CLONBARRY. Why?

LILLAH. Because I don't want to, that's all. Mr. Stein . . . you'll ask Grace to take my place to-night . . . please . . . for me. She's done it before.

STEIN. I'm sure Grace will be charmed . . . but . . .

LILLAH (*impatently*). Oh! but—but—but!

## AT THE BARN.

STEIN. All right, my dear child . . . all right . . . It's no affair of mine . . . I'm not responsible for you. I'm going to sit on your lawn, Mr. Maxwell, if you don't mind. You'll find me there, Clonbarry.

CLONBARRY. Very well, Stein.

STEIN (*to CRANE, who rises*). No, please don't trouble.

CRANE (*going towards the window*). This is the shortest way.

STEIN. Oh, thanks. (*He nods to MAXWELL, and goes out, followed by CRANE.*)

MAXWELL (*to CLONBARRY, rising*). Can I offer you anything?

CLONBARRY. Thank you, nothing.

MAXWELL *is about to follow CRANE and STEIN.*

LILLAH. No. Please don't go, Mr. Maxwell . . . please.

*The look in her eyes arrests MAXWELL, and he comes back.*

MAXWELL (*to LEWIS*). Billy, will you try if you can induce Mr. Stein to partake of our hospitality?

LEWIS. Right-oh, old man. (*To LILLAH as he goes towards the window.*) I'm going to put on a clean collar. Don't go away until you've seen me.

*He nods cheerfully at her and goes out.*

*There is a brief silence.*

CLONBARRY. Mr. Maxwell, it may appear a very extraordinary request to make . . . but might I speak to Miss Blair for a few moments alone?

MAXWELL. Certainly.

LILLAH. No, no. (*Rising and catching MAXWELL'S coat-sleeve. Wretchedly.*) Oh! (*Letting MAXWELL go and facing CLONBARRY.*) Look: I beg of you, don't worry me . . . don't ask for reasons. Please go. You say you love me . . . that you would do anything to please me . . . If you do—if you really want to do something good and kind—do that. Go away—and leave me by myself.

CLONBARRY (*staggered*). Do you mean—leave you here? (*A pause.*) Are you going to remain here?

*There is a moment of silence.*

MAXWELL (*who has turned away and is carefully settling his slightly dishevelled locks at a glass, his back*

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towards LILLAH and CLONBARRY: *calmly*). Yes. Miss Blair thinks of spending a few weeks with us. (*Screwing his neck so as to get a view of the more remote regions of his head.*) That is, if she can endure our very dull and uninspiring society for so long.

CLONBARRY (*hopelessly puzzled*). But—you told me just now——

MAXWELL. I told you that I had never met Miss Blair before. (*He bends down to remove an imaginary speck from his trouser leg.*) But that was a whopper. (*Raising his face.*)

CLONBARRY (*icily*). Indeed?

MAXWELL. Yes. (*He smiles a bland and childish smile.*) I'm a dreadful whopperer. (*Confidentially.*) Nervousness, you know. Pure nervousness. I'm fearfully nervous. I had an extremely nasty attack of influenza during the winter—and I never pulled up properly after it. (*Momentarily depressed.*) I don't think I've told the truth twice this year. (*Smiling again.*) Funny, isn't it?

CLONBARRY (*rather furious*). Very interesting, I'm sure.

MAXWELL. I think so. (*Modestly.*) I'm an awfully interesting chap, really—when you get to know me properly. Sorry you can't stay and make a study of me. But I know you're in a hurry. (*With his hand on the bell.*) Sure I can't offer you anything before you go?

CLONBARRY *fixes on him an exceedingly threatening glare, which MAXWELL meets with a genial and maddening smile. They remain so for a few moments, looking at one another in silence.*

CLONBARRY *looks away first. MAXWELL's smile accentuates itself slightly as he rings the bell.*

CLONBARRY (*to LILLAH*). I don't understand—but I ask you—once and for all—are you coming back to town with us?

LILLAH. No, Cecil.

CLONBARRY. Surely I have the right to expect some explanation?

LILLAH. Not now. Some other time.

CLONBARRY. You are going back on your promise. Is

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that what it means? (*She makes no reply.*) Answer me. Does it mean that?

LILLAH. I don't know. I will tell you—I will tell you—in a fortnight.

CLONBARRY (*after a silent scrutiny of her face*). Very well, then—in a fortnight.

*He turns and looks at MAXWELL, not angrily this time, but as if trying to arrive at some estimate.*

MAXWELL meets the look quite frankly.

(*Slowly.*) I give it up. (*He goes forward, holding out his hand.*) I've no doubt we shall meet again.

MAXWELL (*simply*). In a fortnight—perhaps less. (*They shake hands as they speak.*)

CLONBARRY. Good-bye, Lillums. (*He goes towards her as if to kiss her.*) (*LILLAH moves away quickly.*)

CLONBARRY (*with a rather hard little laugh*). Oh, very well, then.

(*KNOWLES appears at the door.*)

MAXWELL. Knowles, will you show Lord Clonbarry the short cut to the road.

CLONBARRY. Oh, thanks.

[*He goes out, followed by KNOWLES.*  
(*A pause.*)

LILLAH. I know you hate me.

MAXWELL. Oh, nonsense. (*A pause.*)

LILLAH (*wistfully*). Don't you ever have afternoon tea?

MAXWELL. How stupid of me! I'm most awfully sorry. Knowles will be back in a very few minutes. Can you last out until then?

LILLAH. I will try.

MAXWELL (*in a business-like tone*). Now, look here, Miss Blair. We've done this . . . I really don't know exactly why . . . but we've done it—and we've got to make the best of a situation which uncharitable people might be disposed to make the worst of. We must be a little careful, you know. Even in this Paradise there are serpents with forked tongues. I think you'd better be my sister-in-law—or my sister—I mean, outside The Barn. What do you yourself think?

LILLAH. I quite agree. But not a sister-in-law. If you wish, I'll try to be a sister to you.

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MAXWELL (*dubiously*). M'yes. Very well, then. But mind—this is serious. Er—what about clothes, and so on?

LILLAH. Is there a telegraph office in the village?

MAXWELL. Yes.

LILLAH. I can wire for clothes. They should reach me to-morrow, shouldn't they?

MAXWELL. I suppose so.

(*A pause.*)

MAXWELL. Ah—you can rely on Knowles implicitly. He's been with me for eleven years. (*Abruptly*). There's no bath-room, you know. You must tub in your own room.

LILLAH (*averting her face to conceal a smile*). Of course. What time is breakfast?

MAXWELL. Breakfast? Oh, any time. Luncheon, any time. Dinner—

LILLAH (*quickly*). Tea at five.

MAXWELL. Tea at five. Dinner at eight—and—well, I think that's all. I believe I hear Knowles. Will you order tea? He'd have a fit if I did.

*He rings as he speaks, and KNOWLES comes in.*

LILLAH. Will you get tea, please, Knowles.

KNOWLES (*visibly taken aback for a moment, but controlling himself manfully*). Yes, madam. For one, madam?

LILLAH (*to MAXWELL*). For one?

MAXWELL. Not for me, thank you.

LILLAH (*resignedly*). One.

KNOWLES. Yes, madam.

[*He goes out.*

(*A pause.*)

LILLAH (*after a glance at MAXWELL, nervously*). Mr. Maxwell. . . .

MAXWELL. Yes?

LILLAH. It's awfully nice of you to say nothing—but—you *must* wonder about Lord Clonbarry. (*Raising her eyes to his earnestly*.) Don't you?

MAXWELL. A little, I confess. Forgive me for asking, but—are you engaged to him?

LILLAH. No. (*A pause.*) And yes. (*She rises. A pause.*) I had better tell you the truth. You will probably think even less of me than you do at present—but—

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it will explain things. (*A pause.*) I met Lord Clonbarry two years ago—in Dublin. I was over there in one of George Parry's touring companies in "The Duke of Dalmatia"—I hadn't a part, you know. Just in the chorus. (*A pause. She fidgets her toe along the pattern of the carpet.*) I wonder if you have any idea of what that life is like?

MAXWELL. I think so.

LILLAH (*shaking her head*). No. I think only a woman can know. I had no money—my parents both died when I was a youngster, and, as I have told you already, my only relative was an old aunt who couldn't bear me, and whom I couldn't bear. No money—no friends, real friends—no home—no certainty of any kind. One gets to look at things from a very curious point of view under those circumstances, Mr. Maxwell. (*A pause.*) And I knew I had talent. I always knew that if I could only get a chance, I had talent. Well—I met Lord Clonbarry one night at supper—he was over buying hunters at the Show—it was Horse Show week. He was—nice, nice-looking, plenty of money, generous, and fond of me—from the first. I went about with him all that week. And I suppose I told him a good deal about myself—you know?

MAXWELL (*with a nod*). I know.

LILLAH. Well—in the end (*her voice hardens*) I made a bargain with him. I wanted a chance; he told me he believed he could give it to me, so I made a bargain with him.

MAXWELL *walks over to the window and stands looking out while she continues.*

LILLAH. He has kept his promise. It's taken some time—nearly two years. But he has succeeded in giving me what I thought I wanted. (*Bitterly.*) As the "Sketch" informs you, I'm to play the principal part in "Poor Miss Plantagenet" at the Frivolity in the autumn. The ambition, the dream of my life, is realised. The contract was signed last week, and—now—now I've got to fulfil my share of the bargain.

MAXWELL. You don't want to marry Clonbarry?

LILLAH. He has never asked me to marry him. (*MAXWELL turns sharply.*) There—you have the whole thing now. (*A pause.*) As soon as the contract was

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signed I began to try to back out of my bargain with him—to try to put him off—to cheat him. But it's useless; he won't give me up. I know it's useless. (*A pause.*) If he hadn't always been so kind and generous and nice to me, and given me such a good time . . . I don't know why I tell you all this . . . except that I haven't a friend in the world . . . and that I feel somehow that you're one.

MAXWELL (*after a pause*). You like him?

LILLAH. Yes; I like him. Everybody likes him. (*A pause.*) The theatre shuts down to-morrow night, and next week he wants me to go away with him. He's bought a new steam yacht; he brought me down to Southampton to-day to show her to me.

MAXWELL (*after a moment*). Well . . . there are several very obvious and very moral things to say, but I don't suppose they're likely to be of any use to you. In the end you will do just what you want to do—so much I guess of you. And, that being so, in the meanwhile, if I were you, I should not distress myself by any quite unnecessary speculations as to what you ought to do.

LILLAH. How hard you are!

MAXWELL. My dear child, compared to your hardness, mine is that of a sucking babe. You don't believe me. (*He goes and picks up CRANE'S sketch.*) Crane knows it too, you see.

LILLAH (*quickly*). You won't tell him?

MAXWELL. Dear God, no!

LILLAH. Or Mr. Lewis? (*MAXWELL shakes his head.*) Not until I've gone, at any rate.

*The door opens, and KNOWLES appears, carrying a tea-tray, which he deposits near LILLAH.*

LILLAH. Thank you.

KNOWLES (*going over to MAXWELL, in an undertone*). Shall I put out your evening clothes, Sir? Mr. Lewis and Mr. Crane told me to put out theirs, Sir, so I thought—

MAXWELL (*angrily*). Certainly not. Where are Mr. Crane and Mr. Lewis?

KNOWLES. Bathing themselves, Sir.

MAXWELL. All right. Get a bath ready for me, and bring a whisky-and-soda to my room.

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KNOWLES. Yes, Sir.

MAXWELL. And see that the spare bedroom is got ready for Miss Blair.

KNOWLES. Yes, Sir.

[*He goes out.*]

MAXWELL. Got everything you want, Miss Blair?

LILLAH (*imitating his jauntiness, bravely*). Yes, thank you.

MAXWELL. Well—if you don't mind, I think I shall go and change. (*Over his shoulder, as he goes out.*) There are cigarettes on the piano.

LILLAH. Thank you.

[*He goes out.*]

LILLAH *pours out a cup of tea, then blows her nose, puts some milk into the tea very slowly and thoughtfully. Blows her nose again. Selects a little cake from a dish, bites it, dabs one eye with her handkerchief, takes another bite, dabs the other eye, swallows some tea, snivels a little, raises her handkerchief to her eyes and keeps it there, but selects a second cake with discrimination, cries openly, but proceeds steadily in the intervals with an obviously consoling meal.*

END OF ACT I.



## ACT II.

*The scene represents a corner of the garden at The Barn, near the house. At the back a tall yew hedge runs across from left to right obliquely, broken in the middle by a gap, which shows the end of a path bordered by similar hedges and running backwards, at right angles to the nearer hedge towards the house. This path leads forward to a small flight of stone steps set in the face of the bank in front of the hedge, and then runs off to the right.*

*The time is the afternoon of a day a fortnight later.*

*Somewhere in the distance one hears faintly at intervals the sound of a mowing machine.*

*On a garden seat LEWIS lies stretched at full length, a straw hat tilted over his face. An illustrated paper has slipped from his hand to the ground beside the seat.*

*After a moment LILLAH and CRANE come slowly along the path from the right, chatting desultorily, golf clubs over their shoulders.*

CRANE. I'm not quite sure. On a seaside course, yes. But on an inland course I think a larger ball is easier to pick up.

LILLAH. Not so likely to settle down into small hollows and things? I suppose not. (*Catching sight of LEWIS.*) My hat! Billy's come back. (*Coming quickly towards LEWIS.*) What's the meaning of this? (*Standing over him.*) You needn't pretend to be asleep, my dear. We know you always sleep with your mouth open.

(*CRANE has now lifted LEWIS's hat from his face.*)

CRANE. He is, I believe. Dead to the wicked, weary world. Doesn't he look angelic?

LILLAH. He is rather angelic, you know, Billy. I think, on the whole, he's the only man I've ever known who combined perfect Christianity with properly-cut trousers.

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CRANE. Billy's all right. (*A pause.*) Billy's all right.

LILLAH (*musingly*). You're all different, you three, aren't you? Poor old Billy couldn't do anything bad if he tried. You . . . you could, but you try not to. That right?

CRANE. About.

LILLAH. You've got to try pretty hard not to, sometimes, haven't you?

CRANE (*a little embarrassed*). Get away.

LILLAH. Oh, yes, you have. *I know.*

CRANE. Well—Maxwell? What about him?

LILLAH. Oh, he doesn't worry about being bad or good. He just does what he wants to . . . and it looks right. He told me I was like that, too. But I'm not. A woman can't be. I should be, though, if I were a man. (*She bends down with a little laugh, and kisses LEWIS lightly on the forehead.*) W . . . ake up!

LEWIS (*without a move*). You may do that again if you want to.

LILLAH. Oh, you old fraud!

LEWIS. I heard every word you said. Every single word. Angel, indeed! (*Sitting up.*) I'm a perfect devil.

LILLAH. We know. We were only pulling your tail.

LEWIS (*severely*). Perhaps. But I do *not* sleep with my mouth open. I always shut it carefully the very last thing.

CRANE. Better late than never.

LEWIS (*lying down again*). You are both most unkind.

LILLAH. Serve you right for coming back a day before you were expected.

CRANE (*sitting on LEWIS*). You had it pretty hot in town, I expect?

LEWIS. Awful. I hope they've been good boys while I was away, Lillah?

LILLAH. M'yes. Jimbi has. I don't know about the other. In fact, since you went, we've scarcely set eyes on Mr. Maxwell. Except at meal-times.

LEWIS. Oh! (*A pause.*)

LILLAH. He's been working very hard at his book—we *think*.

LEWIS. Oh. (*A pause.*) How's the goff?

LILLAH. Fair.

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CRANE. Fair! I tried to give her a half this morning. She beat me five and four.

LEWIS. But you're no good.

LILLAH. He had a seventy-six.

LEWIS. It doesn't matter. He's no good.

CRANE (*who has picked up LEWIS's paper, sitting on LEWIS with renewed determination, and reading*): "A charming picture of Miss Lillah Blair, who will play the title-rôle in Mr. Hammersley's forthcoming production, 'Poor Miss Plantagenet!'" (*After an inspection of the photograph.*) My word!

LEWIS. I say, they *are* booming you, Lillah. I bought four illustrated papers at Paddington, and there was a photograph of you in every one of them. You're becoming a public nuisance.

CRANE. Not this particular photograph, I trust. May I ask, in which of your parts does this represent you, Lillah?

LILLAH (*who is seated at some little distance from him*). What have I got on?

CRANE. Well . . . er . . . you've got on what appears to be a very handsome necklace, sandals, and a rather saucy smile. The other things don't seem to have come out.

LILLAH. Oh, that awful thing! That was in "The Princess and the Shover." You saw me in that. Don't you remember?

CRANE. Well . . . really, there's so little to remember.

LILLAH (*laughing*). I think I hear Knowles. You might turn over that page.

(KNOWLES *comes towards them from the house.*)

KNOWLES. You got your telegrams, Miss Lillah?

LILLAH. Oh, yes, thank you. It was very good of you to leave them over at the club-house.

KNOWLES. Good, miss! It's a pleasure for me or anyone to do anything for you.

CRANE. In reason, of course, Knowles. In reason.

KNOWLES. You know your own limitations, Mr. Crane, Sir, I've no doubt. (*To LILLAH.*) The two young females have finished now, miss.

LILLAH. Everything?

KNOWLES. Yes, miss. I investigated into their proceedings myself, miss, personally.

## AT THE BARN.

LILLAH. Carpets down?

KNOWLES. Yes, miss.

LILLAH. Curtains up?

KNOWLES. Yes, miss.

LILLAH. They were well beaten and shaken, I hope?

KNOWLES. Yes, miss.

LILLAH. All the rooms thoroughly cleaned out?

KNOWLES. Yes, miss. At least, all except Mr. Maxwell's study.

LILLAH. But I said distinctly that Mr. Maxwell's study was to be done first of all.

KNOWLES. Well, miss, Mr. Maxwell came upstairs. Just as they were starting on it . . . and . . .

LILLAH. Well?

KNOWLES. He appeared to be displeased, miss. In fact, I was obliged to remove the young females to another apartment. It isn't often Mr. Maxwell uses bad language, but when he does, he's got a great gift of it.

LEWIS. Very flattering testimony from such an expert as yourself, Knowles.

KNOWLES. I have heard some, Sir.

LEWIS. Mr. Maxwell hasn't come in yet, has he?

KNOWLES. Not yet, Sir. (*He goes back to the house.*)

CRANE. Haven't you seen him, then.

LEWIS. No. (*A pause.*)

CRANE. Er . . . the glass has gone back a bit.

LEWIS (*staring at him*). Oh. Has it?

CRANE. Yes.

LILLAH. In fact, it's been falling steadily ever since you went away.

LEWIS (*a pause*). Oh.

LILLAH. Yes. (*Imitating LEWIS.*) Oh.

LEWIS (*after a stare at her*). Oh. Well . . . as the young females have now probably evacuated my room, I think I shall go and remove some of the grime of travel.

LILLAH. If you're looking for your flannels, they're in the third drawer, under your soft shirts. Your ties are in a long box on the dressing table. And I've bought you a nice small sponge. You make too much splash with that big one.

LEWIS. Oh. Do I?

LILLAH. Yes. And you must promise me to stop smoking in bed. Jimbi has. And so has Mr. Maxwell—practically.

## AT THE BARN.

LEWIS. Why?

LILLAH. Because you burn holes in the sheets and make a horrible mess. And, anyhow, it's a filthy trick. Now! Promise.

LEWIS (*sighing*). Very well. I promise. But . . . (*Going towards the house.*) Good Lord! I might as well be your husband.

LILLAH. Ah-ha! If you were . . .

LEWIS. No wonder the glass has been falling! (*He goes out of sight.*) (*There is a little pause.*)

LILLAH. In fact, Jimbi, I don't mind telling you that I expect a storm before dinner-time.

CRANE. How horrible of you!

LILLAH. Yes, isn't it? You were all so peaceful and happy and untidy before I came. (*A pause. Fingering her skirt.*) Do you like this stuff?

CRANE. It's all right.

LILLAH (*laughing*). That's the high-water mark of your approbation. "All right." Does nothing ever arouse you to enthusiasm?

CRANE. Oh, yes.

LILLAH. What?

CRANE. That tee shot of mine at the fourteenth today, for instance. And the little curls at the back of your neck. And Knowles's omelettes.

LILLAH. Pig! It's no good. I can't get up a flirtation with you. A man who sandwiches my curls in between his own tee-shots and Knowles's omelettes is—*incapable de tout*. You're all hopeless. I've never come across three such utterly impossible men.

CRANE (*smiling*). Well . . . your fortnight is up tomorrow. Thank Heaven!

LILLAH (*standing before him.*) Do you want me to go, too?

CRANE. Too?

LILLAH. Oh, don't be a hypocrite. What's the good? You know very well that Mr. Maxwell is only waiting for the announcement of my departure.

CRANE. Nonsense. Nonsense.

LILLAH. It isn't. (*A little indignantly.*) Why does he treat me so badly? I can't understand it. I've done nothing to him.

CRANE. What has he done to you?

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LILLAH. Nothing. That's just it. Not that I want him to do anything to me . . . but . . . it's the way he looks at me, the way he speaks to me—that tone of icy politeness. I should much prefer him to be openly rude and nasty to me. (*Sitting down dejectedly.*) I don't want him to make a fuss about me. But why can't he be agreeable and nice, like you and Billy?

CRANE (*screwing up one eye at his boot*). He doesn't go in for that sort of thing, as a rule—with women.

LILLAH (*curiously*). No? But I should say Mr. Maxwell had known a great many women . . . well.

CRANE. That is possibly why.

LILLAH. Oh, come, Jimbi! There are plenty of nice, good women in the world.

CRANE (*rising and coming behind her*). Plenty of 'em. God bless 'em. Cheer up, Lillah *mie*. Perhaps there will be hot cakes for tea. (*There is a little pause.*) Maxwell's a curious fellow in some ways. He had rather a rough time of it in his early days, you see, and it has left its mark on him. It takes a little while to get behind that manner of his.

LILLAH. Tell me about him. I want to know.

CRANE. Well . . . I really know very little about him . . . in detail. I know that he started life on his own when he was fifteen. His mother married a second time, and I believe the second time was a bit of a bully. Anyhow, they parted on very bad terms, and Maxwell went out to some distant cousins in Florida. He stayed with them for a bit, and then he started out on his wild lone again, and, I think, had quite an exciting time. Drifting about, apparently, from one place to another, trying his hand at all sorts of things, making a living any way he could. I know for a fact that he was a chucker-out in a dancing saloon in Chicago for a while.

LILLAH. How funny! He!

CRANE. Then he drifted down to Texas. I understand that the charming scoundrels in "The Cattleman" were intimate friends of his.

LILLAH. Gracious!

CRANE. The next thing I know about him is that he enlisted in the Canadian Mounted Police. He'll tell you all about that. That's quite a presentable period—and

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extremely interesting. Have you noticed a small bald patch on the top of his head?

LILLAH. Yes.

CRANE. That's a souvenir of a gentleman whom he followed four hundred miles and brought back to Fort Cornwall to be hanged. Pleasant company they must have been, those two. He's got the bullet still. It grazed his head and stuck in a tree. (*A pause.*) So, you see, one way or another, he had a fairly rough time of it. Of course, when his mother died, he came in for some money, and he came home and settled down, and has lived more or less like an ordinary Christian—but still, as I say, it's left its mark. And so (*bending down and pulling her ear fraternally*) you mustn't allow yourself to run away with any entirely false notions about . . . anything.

MAXWELL *comes along the path from the house. He stops for a moment, taking in the intimacy of CRANE and LILLAH's attitude.*

(*Turning and seeing him.*) H'lo, Maxwell. I hear your study has *not* been cleaned out. Congratulations, old chap.

MAXWELL (*smiling rather grimly*). Thanks. (*To LILLAH, formally.*) Had a good game, Miss Blair?

LILLAH (*as formally*). Yes, thank you.

MAXWELL (*to CRANE*). I saw you in the distance against the sky. You're dropping your right shoulder, you're going back much too quickly, you're looking up much too soon, and you're not following through at all.

CRANE. Oh, that explains why I was playing so well.

MAXWELL. Perhaps. But in silhouette the effect is distressing. (*To LILLAH.*) Er . . . are those two very industrious young women going to make a day of it—or do you think they've smothered themselves to death by this?

LILLAH. They've finished now, I believe. I think it's only fair to warn you, however, that you will find clean curtains in your bedroom. Do you think you can bear the shock?

MAXWELL. The confidence that a repetition of the experience is unlikely will, no doubt, sustain me.

LILLAH. How cutting!

CRANE. Billy's come back, by the way.

MAXWELL. Indeed? Where is he?

CRANE. In the house. Hunting for his socks, I expect. (*KNOWLES comes towards them from the house.*)

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KNOWLES. Miss Hawes wishes to see you, Miss Lillah.

CRANE (*gathering up his clubs hastily*). Miss Hawes?

KNOWLES (*to MAXWELL*). She asked for you, Sir. But I wasn't aware that you had returned from your walk.

MAXWELL. Ask her to come out here, will you.

(KNOWLES goes back towards the house.)

CRANE. I'm off.

LILLAH. Coward!

CRANE. You've got Maxwell to protect you. Now—be nice to her, children.

God made her too,  
Like Me and You,  
And the things in the Zoo,  
Hurroo, hurroo!

(*He goes out, smiling.*)

(LILLAH seats herself. *There is a little pause.*)

LILLAH. I . . . ah . . . I hope you are not dreadfully annoyed about this Spring Cleaning of mine, are you?

MAXWELL. Annoyed? Not in the least, my dear Miss Blair, I assure you. (*A pause.*)

LILLAH. You haven't been able to do any work this morning, I suppose?

MAXWELL (*picking up LEWIS'S newspaper; speaking in the most casual of tones*). I haven't been able to do any work for the past fortnight.

LILLAH. No? (*A pause.*) Why not? (*A pause.*) Truthfully?

MAXWELL (*looking at her*). Truthfully?

LILLAH. Yes.

MAXWELL. Well . . . frankly . . . don't you think you are rather a disturbing person?

LILLAH. Am I? I'm so sorry. I don't mean to be. (*A pause.*) You mean . . . I actually come between you and your work?

MAXWELL. Actually. Your singing and your playing, your laugh, your voice about the house, the swish of your skirts on the stairs, your domestic reforms, your Spring Cleanings—your—your—personality—they're all distractions. New . . . unfamiliar . . . disturbing.

LILLAH. In other words—an infernal nuisance.

MAXWELL (*coolly*). No, no. Just . . . disturbing.



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LILLAH (*after a moment*). Your work. . . . It's everything to you, of course.

MAXWELL. Not everything. A great deal.

LILLAH. But why? What does it matter, really? In fifty years no one will ever have heard of your books. Or are you sanguine enough to hope that you will write even one that will outlive the thousands published and forgotten every year?

MAXWELL (*unruffled*). No. I have no illusions. Still—such as they are . . . so long as it pleases me . . . I shall continue to write books . . . as well as I can.

LILLAH. And with as little . . . disturbance as possible.

MAXWELL. Naturally.

LILLAH. I see.

KNOWLES comes into sight along the path at the back, followed slowly by MISS HAWES. *Miss Hawes is a thin, formidable spinster of about forty-five, attired with severe simplicity. She has a habit of blowing her nose in a menacing way—a single, slow, sonorous, solemn, startling, sinister blast. One such now heralds her approach behind the hedge.*

MAXWELL (*going to meet her*). Good afternoon, Miss Hawes.

MISS HAWES (*severely*). Good afternoon, Mr. Maxwell. (*KNOWLES returns to the house.*)

LILLAH (*amicably*). How do you do?

MISS HAWES (*icily*). How do you do?

*She seats herself, and for a moment regards MAXWELL in ominous silence.*

MAXWELL. I hope the Rector is better?

MISS HAWES. My brother's condition remains unchanged.

MAXWELL. I'm sorry to hear that. (*There is a silence.*)

LILLAH. Is it too early to offer you tea?

MISS HAWES (*grimly*). I have not come for tea. I have come to discharge a duty.

LILLAH (*after a little glance at her face*). Oh. (*As she turns away to seat herself.*) Well, perhaps you'll take tea afterwards—when you've made room for it.

MISS HAWES receives the remark in silence. *After a moment she blows her nose.*

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MAXWELL (*smiling*). A duty, Miss Hawes?

MISS HAWES. An extremely unpleasant one, Mr. Maxwell. I should have preferred that my brother—as the spiritual guardian of our little community—should have been the one to execute that duty. But as he is confined to bed with a greatly enlarged liver, there has devolved upon me the . . . ah . . .

LILLAH (*sweetly*). Pleasure . . .

MISS HAWES (*glaring*) . . . the painful necessity of coming here to protest against the . . . what I must term the grave scandal of this . . . lady's presence in your house.

*There is a silence. She blows her nose balefully.*

*At the sound LILLAH glances at her.*

MAXWELL (*smiling, not very amiably*). Yes?

MISS HAWES. Yes.

LILLAH. That's very noble of you.

MISS HAWES (*beginning afresh*). It is my duty . . .

LILLAH (*jumping up*). Just one moment . . . before you start again. Your bonnet is crooked. Do let me straighten it!

MISS HAWES (*rising hastily and waving her off*). Ah . . . straighten your own life, Miss Blair. That may profit you more.

LILLAH. Oh. You've found out my name?

MISS HAWES. Yes. I've found out your name.

LILLAH. How clever of you. (*Taking advantage of the fact that MISS HAWES has re-seated herself to make a rapid and successful attack on the offending bonnet.*) There! (*Giving MISS HAWES'S ribbons a little chuck.*) That's better.

MISS HAWES (*outraged, rising again*). I protest, Mr. Maxwell! I protest against this unseemly levity in so serious a matter.

MAXWELL. Well . . . but what can I do, my dear Miss Hawes?

LILLAH. Enter the protest on the minutes and move an adjournment.

MISS HAWES. Ah, my dear young lady, my protest is recorded. Be sure of that. Be very sure of that. You ask me what you can do, Mr. Maxwell. Don't you know what you must do? Remove this scandal from

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our midst. I ask you that. I ask you to give me an assurance that you will do that. As a Christian—as a gentleman.

LILLAH. But, you know, Mr. Maxwell is neither a Christian nor a gentleman. He's a realistic novelist.

MISS HAWES. Cease! I beg of you, cease.

*She blows her nose again. LILLAH starts resentfully; then, getting out her handkerchief, conducts some private experiments discreetly.*

MAXWELL (*still polite*). I'm afraid I don't understand. You know, of course, that my sister uses the name Blair professionally?

MISS HAWES. Your sister?

MAXWELL. Yes. My sister . . . You are aware that she is, professionally, an actress?

MISS HAWES. Ah, Mr. Maxwell, don't . . . don't. It is useless to prevaricate. I have made full enquiries. You have no sister. You never had a sister. I know all about Miss Blair. An actress! As far as I have been able to discover, she would be more correctly described as a ballet-dancer. She is not your sister, I know. She is not your wife, I . . .

LILLAH. . . . hope . . .

MISS HAWES. To that I say Amen! With all my heart, Amen! (*She blows her nose again.*)

LILLAH. How on earth do you do that? I can't do it at all.

MISS HAWES (*advancing on LILLAH in wrath*). You wicked creature! Have you no sense of your situation? No sense of shame? No sense of anything?

LILLAH (*quietly*). I have a sense of humour. But that doesn't help one to appreciate people like you in quite the right sort of way, does it?

MISS HAWES (*after a baleful glare*). I pity you. I make one more appeal to you, Mr. Maxwell. Let me return to the Rectory with an assurance that you will make the only possible atonement for the . . . the imposition you have practised upon us by introducing this . . . person . . . to us as your sister. God knows, I am the last person in the world to place an evil construction upon the . . . the most suspicious appearances, but you must see that, in this case, such a construction is inevitable. Lady Hawtrey expressed herself to me only this morning

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in the strongest possible terms in reference to this . . . this . . .

LILLAH. . . . suspicious appearance.

MISS HAWES. Lady Hawtrey, who is, as you know, a most pure-minded and charitable woman.

LILLAH. With three dowdy daughters. I saw them all glaring at my frock in church on Sunday.

MISS HAWES (*picking up LEWIS'S newspaper*). Here—here in this very newspaper—is a photograph which would call the blush of shame to any modest cheek. Think of the effect that photograph may produce upon the minds of our young men here in Etterby!

MAXWELL. But, my good lady, even if the young men of Etterby have any minds—a thing which I doubt very much—I am not their custodian. I really don't care a jack straw what effect that photograph produces on the young men of Etterby.

LILLAH. The really dreadful thing is the effect it produces upon the middle-aged ladies of Etterby.

MISS HAWES. I may be middle-aged; but still I am respectable.

LILLAH. Oh, well, it's not too late to do something about that.

MAXWELL. Personally, I haven't seen the photograph, but . . .

MISS HAWES. You haven't? Look at it. I beg of you, look at it. (*She puts the photograph before him.*)

MAXWELL (*after an inspection, placidly*). Well? What's the matter with it?

MISS HAWES. You ask me what is the matter with . . . with that . . . that indecent exhibition?

MAXWELL. But, you know, that's quite a usual sort of thing. Not here, in this garden, of course—but on the stage. Really.

MISS HAWES. If that is your attitude, Mr. Maxwell, I fear my errand is a fruitless one.

MAXWELL. Oh, quite, I assure you.

MISS HAWES. Very well. (*Putting down the newspaper.*) I shall say no more—save to express, on my brother's behalf and my own, our profound regret that a friendship which we both valued so highly should, of necessity, be abandoned for so unworthy and deplorable a

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cause. Good afternoon. (*As MAXWELL moves.*) No, pray don't trouble. I leave you to your dalliance.

*She goes towards the house. A final blast from her indignant nose marks her departure from the garden.*

*There is a moment's silence, then MAXWELL laughs vexedly.*

MAXWELL. How absurd!

LILLAH. You're furious. I know you are. (*She laughs reminiscently.*) The poor young men of Etterby!

CRANE (*who has effected a change of toilet, appearing cautiously from the right*). Has she gone?

LILLAH (*grave again*). Yes, she's gone!

CRANE. What did she come for? An invitation to high tea at the Rectory on Sunday?

LILLAH. No. Not this time. I don't think that you are at all likely to receive any invitations from the Rectory in the immediate future.

CRANE. Why? What has happened?

MAXWELL. Well—I regret to say that Miss Hawes has succeeded in unearthing the fact that Miss Blair is not my sister.

CRANE. God bless her!

MAXWELL. So she's excommunicated us. From this forth we must regard ourselves as cut off from the sweetness and light of the Rectory, I fear.

CRANE (*smiling*). Oh, Lillah, Lillah! What have you done!

LILLAH. Yes, I'm afraid I've got you all into a nice old mess. I suppose your reputations are gone for ever. Though I'm bound to say I don't consider it's all my fault. That wretched photograph is my fault, of course—dash it. But (*to MAXWELL*) it's not my fault that you didn't have a sister. Is it?

MAXWELL. Clearly not.

CRANE. Oh, clearly.

LILLAH (*after a pause*). Well . . . what's going to happen?

MAXWELL. The only person really affected . . . or perhaps I should say, possibly affected, is you. Of course . . . well . . . there aren't very many people about to disapprove of you . . . but such as they are,

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they will probably take some pains to express their disapproval.

LILLAH. Yes. (*Defiantly.*) Let them. I don't care.

MAXWELL. Oh, well, that's all right, then. If you don't care . . . I'm sure we don't. (*To CRANE.*) Do we?

CRANE. Not a rap. Still, it's a bit awkward.

MAXWELL (*with a shrug*). Miss Blair apparently finds it simply amusing. Let us emulate her serenity. (*A pause.*) Prying old cat! (*A pause.*) I mean Miss Hawes.

LILLAH. Bring in my clubs when you're going, Jimbi, will you? I want to coax the gardener to give me some flowers.

CRANE. Right-oh!

LILLAH *disappears slowly along the path to the right.*

MAXWELL, *who has been lighting a cigarette, blows a little cloud after LILLAH.*

MAXWELL. Has Miss Blair vouchsafed to you any intimation as to the probable duration of her visit?

CRANE (*after a silent stare*). I beg your pardon?

MAXWELL. I say, has Miss Blair vouchsafed to you any intimation as to the probable duration of her visit?

CRANE (*stolidly*). I have received from Miss Blair no formal communication in reference to the prolongation or interruption of her visit, but I have inferred from certain observations which Miss Blair has let fall in the course of cursory conversation that her departure from our midst is not, unfortunately, likely to be much longer postponed.

MAXWELL (*staring in turn*). Don't be an ass. (*He sits down disgustedly.*)

CRANE. Well, don't talk journalese to me, then. (*A pause.*) Why? Are you so very anxious to get rid of her?

MAXWELL. Frankly, I am. She's . . . she's too upsetting. Oh—I don't mean this affair in particular; but in general. She's . . . upsetting.

CRANE. But you really don't object to putting on your evening clothes, do you? Or listening to a couple of songs after dinner occasionally? Or to having your laundry checked?

MAXWELL. Yes. I do.

CRANE. You like losing collars?

MAXWELL. I like to be at liberty to lose them if I

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want to. Miss Blair . . . Well . . . during the past two weeks Miss Blair has compelled me to do more things which I really had no desire to do than I've done in all the other thirty-seven odd years of my life.

CRANE. Very good for you, old chap.

MAXWELL. Worse than that, she's about to compel me to do something which I did not believe anyone could have compelled me to do.

CRANE. What's that?

MAXWELL. To tell my oldest and best friend that he's making a confounded fool of himself.

CRANE (*after a scrutiny of MAXWELL'S face*). Meaning me?

MAXWELL. Of course.

CRANE. Thanks. And . . . as how?

MAXWELL. Now, how does a man usually make a fool of himself with a woman?

CRANE. My dear Maxwell!

MAXWELL. My dear Crane! For Heaven's sake let us not squabble over it. I know it's really no affair of mine, and that you're quite old enough to look after yourself. But I can't help it, Jimbi. I can't bear to see you running round after this girl . . . like a big silly . . . ass. (*Exasperated.*) Damn it all, man, you don't think she cares a curse about you, do you?

CRANE (*checking a tendency to smile*). You think she doesn't?

MAXWELL. Think? I know it. I expect you bore her stiff, if the truth were only known.

CRANE (*putting his elbows on his knees and his head between his hands*). Good Lord!

MAXWELL. We all bore her. Everything here bores her, anybody can see that. You know the kind of life these people live . . . rush and bustle and excitement from morning to night.

CRANE. But . . . in that case . . . why has she remained here so long?

MAXWELL. Oh, for a very good reason. I can't tell you what it is . . . but there is a reason; don't make any mistake about that. A reason that has nothing to do with you, Jimbi . . . nothing whatever. She's just making use of us, my dear fellow, that's the fact of the

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matter. Of you principally . . . but of all of us to a certain degree.

CRANE. Well, it doesn't do us much harm, does it?

MAXWELL. None whatever, so long as we keep clearly in mind the fact that we have to deal with an extremely clever, determined and cold-blooded young woman, who is probably laughing in her sleeve at us and our attempts to . . . arouse her interest.

CRANE. Meaning me, again?

MAXWELL. Yes. Chuck it, Jimbi. I saw you pulling her ear just now . . . and, honestly, I felt that I should like to kick you.

CRANE (*after a moment*). Finished?

MAXWELL. Yes.

CRANE. Well, now, listen, sweetheart. (*Rising.*) I may be a silly ass, but I'm not a sulky one. I may bore Miss Blair, but I don't bully her. I may try to arouse her interest : . . but I don't go asleep while she is singing.

MAXWELL. I did not.

CRANE. You did.

MAXWELL. I did not.

CRANE. We all saw you.

MAXWELL. Well, why the devil did Knowles take so long to bring in coffee? (*Rising.*) And, in any case, that has nothing to do with it. She's interrupting my work, too. My heroine is a hard-working Lancashire factory girl . . . but she's begun to talk like Miss Blair . . . and I can't stop it. She must go . . . that's all about it—and the sooner the better.

*He turns and begins to walk slowly towards the house.*

LILLAH *comes along the path from the right, carrying a large basket of roses.*

LILLAH. Mr. Maxwell. . . . (*He stops and turns slowly, but does not go towards her.*) (*Rather nervously.*) I . . . I hope you won't be very angry with me . . . but I've asked some people to come and see me this afternoon.

MAXWELL. My dear Miss Blair, I have been expecting them every day for the past fortnight. (*He turns again and strolls on towards the house.*) You've warned Knowles, I trust?



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LILLAH. Yes. Please wait a moment. (*He turns again.*) I should have warned you too, but I really didn't know until about half an hour ago, for certain. . . . I was on the links when their wires came, you see.

MAXWELL. I see. (*Turning again.*) Jimbi, I rely upon you to support Miss Blair. Billy and I think of doing nine holes before dinner.

LILLAH. Oh, won't you stay? There are two awfully pretty girls . . . who are simply dying to meet you.

MAXWELL. Poor dears! Two?

LILLAH. Grace Trevelyan and Linda Moore. I suppose you've heard of them?

MAXWELL (*stifling a yawn*). The names do sound vaguely familiar.

LILLAH (*yawning*). Kittenish imbeciles, you know. (*Coaxingly.*) But you might postpone your game with Billy. What do you say (*to CRANE*), old stick-in-the-mud?

CRANE (*primly*). You mustn't talk to me. I'm in disgrace.

LILLAH. What have you been doing now?

CRANE. Flirting with you.

LILLAH. Oh. (*After a glance at MAXWELL, whose brows have gone together angrily.*) How naughty of you! (*Going and placing herself before MAXWELL with her most bewitching smile.*) Well? Made up your great mind?

*The sound of voices coming towards them from the house attracts her attention.*

I'm afraid you're caught. Unless I'm very much mistaken. . . . (*Listening.*) Yes, they have arrived. Do stay! To please me!

MAXWELL. You? (*His eyes go over her as she stands smiling at him, her head on one side, her hands behind her back.*) (*Defeated.*) Yes. (*Turning away.*) All right.

LILLAH. Cheer up! They won't stay long . . . and perhaps they'll take me away with them—and then all your troubles will be over.

*LEWIS comes along the path from the house, with LILLAH'S friends. GRACE TREVELYAN and LINDA MOORE are two very pretty girls, beautifully gowned, gay, light-hearted and happy-go-lucky. BERTIE AKERMANN is a dear boy of about twenty-five, charming face, manner and clothes.*

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LEWIS, STEIN and GRACE are slightly in advance;  
AKERMANN and LINDA follow.

STEIN (*as they come along the path and down the steps*).  
Charming spot! Charming! Damme, I shouldn't mind  
settling down to the simple life in a quiet little nook like  
this, myself. . . . Sport with Amaryllis in the shade, sort  
of thing. (*Seeing LILLAH.*) Hello! Hello!

GRACE (*running forward to embrace LILLAH*). Oh . . .  
you old darling! It is . . . (*kissing her*) nice to . . .  
(*kissing her*) see you again.

LINDA (*running forward to do likewise*). Oh, Lillums!  
Lillums! Lillums!

AKERMANN. Oh, Lillums, Lillums, Lillums! (*He  
feigns an intention to do likewise.*)

LILLAH. Now, Bertie, be a good boy.

LINDA. We thought we should never, never, never see  
you any more.

CRANE *nods to STEIN and goes over to join him and  
LEWIS.*

LILLAH. Here I am . . . still alive and kicking.  
Come along and let me introduce you to your host.

*Looking round, she discovers that MAXWELL, after a  
nod to STEIN, has turned and is quietly retreating  
up the steps.*

Oh! He's running away! Catch him, girls!

MAXWELL, *hearing this exhortation, openly takes to  
his heels. GRACE and LINDA, with a squeal of  
delight turn up their skirts and set off in pursuit.  
All three disappear along the path at the back.*

LILLAH. The villain! Jimbi, may I introduce you to  
Mr. Akermann. (*To AKERMANN.*) This is Jimbi.

CRANE *nods amiably.*

AKERMANN. How d'ye do. (*To LILLAH, fervently.*) I  
say . . . you do look ripping.

LILLAH (*whose attention is distracted by feminine  
laughter from behind the hedge*). Do I? I feel splendid.

MAXWELL (*behind the hedge*). Don't! You mustn't!  
Really . . . it's most unladylike . . . and you're ruining  
my collar.

LINDA. We don't care.

GRACE. Not a scrap.

MAXWELL. Don't you?

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GRACE (*with a sharp squeal*). Don't! Don't!

MAXWELL. Well . . . take that hand away. That's better. (*Sharply*.) Stop it . . . (*Laughing half angrily*.) You little monkey.

AKERMANN (*amused*). What are they at?

LILLAH (*a little uneasily*). I don't know. I hope they . . .

*She stops as MAXWELL comes into sight through the hedge, holding GRACE'S and LINDA'S hands imprisoned in his own.*

MAXWELL (*to LILLAH*). Which is Linda, and which is Grace?

LILLAH. That's Linda.

MAXWELL. Oh, Linda's the pincher. And Grace is the squeezer. (*To the girls*). Pax? (*They make no reply*.) (*He puts a little pressure on the hands*.) Pax?

LINDA and GRACE (*shrilly*). Pax!

MAXWELL (*releasing them*). Go on before me. I don't trust either of you.

LINDA (*from the bottom of the steps*). Just you wait!

LILLAH (*sweetly*). Your frock is open at the back, dear. Mr. Crane—Miss Trevelyan.

GRACE. How do you do?

LINDA (*to MAXWELL*). Is my frock really open at the back?

MAXWELL. Let me see.

LILLAH (*firmly*). Mr. Akermann—Mr. Maxwell.

(*LINDA retreats, obviously meditating repairs.*)

AKERMANN. How do you do? Awful good of you to let us run down and see Miss Blair!

MAXWELL (*whose eyes are on LINDA*). Not at all, not at all. (*Distract*). Won't you sit down . . . or lie down . . . or drink something . . . or something? . . . (*To LINDA*). Do let me try. (*He goes over and is permitted to fasten the offending hook and eye.*)

AKERMANN (*looking after him with a stony eye*). Is he mad?

LILLAH (*laughing*). Quite, sometimes.

AKERMANN. Seems rather taken with Miss Moore.

LILLAH. I shouldn't think so. I shouldn't think Linda would appeal to him in the least.

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AKERMANN (*chaffingly*). Please forgive me if I've said anything stupid.

LILLAH (*coldly*). Don't be absurd!

GRACE (*joining LILLAH and AKERMANN*). Well, Lillums? How's things? What do you think of my hat?

LILLAH. Scrumshus!

AKERMANN. It was the most outrageous hat at Ascot. I never saw Miss Trevelyan look so happy.

LILLAH (*to GRACE*). How did you do?

GRACE. I did well until I unfortunately allowed Captain Yarde to induce me to put a tenner on a wretched horse called *Siffleur*. It started at twenty-five to one . . . and it finished sometime after midnight. (*In the same breath.*) I don't know that I do care about this hat. There was a woman at the *Fête* in Regent's Park yesterday who had one just like it.

AKERMANN (*smiling reminiscently*). I say, wasn't dear old Winnie Thorpe ripping?

GRACE. Oh, wasn't she!

AKERMANN. I haven't laughed so much for years.

GRACE (*to LILLAH*). She called it "Mother's Dip." She came right out on to the grass among the people and undressed under a big towel, and went through, oh! such a performance . . . in the most awful old bathing-dress you ever saw. Everybody shrieked . . . even the old Duchess of Nore tittered. Why weren't you there? Arthur Joyce ran a fortune-telling show . . . and Vera Beecham blacked boots at half-a-crown a time.

AKERMANN. She did it for me for two bob. Shan't be able to wear the boots again, though.

GRACE. Of course you've heard that Elsie Mayston is engaged to Sir Arthur Park?

LILLAH. Yes. Linda told me in one of her letters.

GRACE. She's done well for herself. He doesn't know what to do with his money, you know.

AKERMANN. Elsie will soon show him.

GRACE. He's started having lessons. She must have nearly enough diamonds to make a rockery with, already. She's trying to get him to buy her an aeroplane now. Apropos of diamonds . . . where is Lord Clonbarry? We expected to find him here.

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LILLAH. He will be here—at least, I had a wire to say that he was coming down from town this afternoon.

AKERMANN *turns sharply on his heel, and goes over to join the other men.*

GRACE. Oh! has he been down to see you? (LILLAH shakes her head.) No? Poor man! I should think you must have found it very quiet here?

LILLAH. Very.

GRACE. Even allowing for the personal charms of your host, which, I admit, are undeniable. (*A pause.*) Well, I'm waiting.

LILLAH. For what?

GRACE. For a blush or some other sign of maidenly confusion.

LILLAH. Rubbish!

GRACE. Hasn't anything happened, really?

LILLAH. Absolutely nothing.

GRACE. What on earth do you do all day? Golf?

LILLAH. I golf a good deal. I eat a good deal. I read a good deal. I sing a little. I do a little work about the house. . . . I darn socks.

GRACE. Socks! You?

LILLAH. Yes. Just think!

GRACE. What sort are the people about? Very dull and respectable, I should think.

LILLAH. Very.

GRACE. Have you come across them at all?

LILLAH. Yes . . . some of them . . . at the club-house . . . and at church.

GRACE. You go to church?

LILLAH. Yes.

GRACE. My dear child, we must get you out of this at once. You're going to the devil. I expect you get up at six o'clock, or thereabouts?

LILLAH. I have been up at six several mornings. The mornings are simply heavenly here.

GRACE. I suppose you gather mushrooms regularly?

LILLAH. One morning. But I got afraid of them . . . they look so different without sauce . . . so I threw them away.

GRACE. Lord! (*A pause.*) Don't you get restless about ten o'clock at night?

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LILLAH. No. I go to bed at ten . . . and *sleep*. My hat, Grace, I *sleep*.

GRACE. Wish I could. I shall have to start taking something soon. (*Curiously.*) And no adventures? Truly?

LILLAH. Nary one.

GRACE. What stupid men!

LILLAH. Stupid? I don't know about that. But they are men . . . not tom-cats.

*They look at one another and laugh, somewhat ruefully.* GRACE *nods.*

AKERMANN (*joining them*). What are you two conspirators whispering about?

GRACE (*who has risen*). Cats!

*She laughs and goes over to STEIN.*

AKERMANN (*to LILLAH*). Cats? You think of going in for cats?

LILLAH. No . . . I want to get rid of some, Mr. Akermann. You look fearfully bored. What's the matter?

AKERMANN. I *am* bored.

LILLAH. Oh, dear! Why not go home, then?

AKERMANN (*grimly*). Did *you* invite Clonbarry to come down here to see you?

LILLAH. Of course.

AKERMANN (*viciously, after a pause*). Damn him! That's all I've got to say.

LILLAH (*mockingly*). Mr. Akermann!

AKERMANN. I say . . . will you tell me one thing?

CRANE and STEIN *saunter slowly off along the path to the right.*

LILLAH (*to GRACE and LEWIS, who are about to follow them*). I'm giving you tea in the garden, people.

GRACE. Oh! . . . that will be jolly. This way to tea, Linda!

*She goes off along the path to the right, followed by LEWIS.*

LINDA (*to MAXWELL*). Are there any wopses in your garden, Mr. Maxwell?

MAXWELL. If there are, I fear that you will be their principal victim.

LINDA. I? Why?

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MAXWELL (*limply*). Must I explain?

LINDA. Of course.

MAXWELL (*desperately*). Because, dear lady, you will be the sweetest flower in all the garden.

LINDA. Put on your hat, my dear. The sun is getting at the little bald spot on the top of your head. Do you know that you have a little bald spot . . . right at the top . . . just there?

MAXWELL. Have I? Let me look.

LINDA (*laughing*). Shall I get you a glass?

MAXWELL. I need no glass. Have I not your bright eyes?

*He puts his own very close to the eyes in question.*

*LINDA laughs merrily.*

AKERMANN (*who, with LILLAH, has been a spectator of this little scene*). He is mad.

LILLAH (*who has been rather glum, suddenly effecting a complete change in her expression and manner, and concentrating a dazzling smile on AKERMANN; softly*). You were going to ask me something. (*She rests her hand on his sleeve.*) What was it?

AKERMANN. I was going to ask you . . . I was going to ask you about Clonbarry.

LILLAH (*playing with his sleeve*). I'd sooner you didn't talk about Lord Clonbarry, Bertie. I know you don't like him.

AKERMANN. You don't like him, either. (*Eagerly.*) Do you?

LILLAH. Oh yes, I do. (*She looks round just sufficiently to perceive that MAXWELL'S eyes are upon her. He averts them quickly.*) I like him very much. What . . . a pretty tie! The very, very latest!

AKERMANN. But you don't love him?

LILLAH. Oh, I don't love anyone. Something was left out in me . . . I'm afraid . . . I can't manage that sort of thing.

AKERMANN (*doggedly*). Still . . . you like some people better than others?

LILLAH. Some people! You?

AKERMANN. Well . . . yes. Me?

LILLAH. I do like you. You're rather a nice boy, aren't you. (*Still playing with his sleeve.*)

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AKERMANN. Oh . . . I don't know about that . . . but I do know . . . I do know I'm awful fond of you.

LILLAH. Are you? I wonder.

*She glances around and discovers that MAXWELL'S eyes are again upon her. This time he does not avert them. They look at one another steadily, somewhat defiantly.*

LINDA (to MAXWELL.) I simply rave about that last book of yours. (MAXWELL apparently does not hear her.)

LILLAH (deliberately laying her hand on AKERMANN'S, as if unconscious of MAXWELL'S existence). I wonder.

MAXWELL (grabbing LINDA'S hand with feigned fervour). I was sure you would.

LILLAH (laughing a little as she drops AKERMANN'S hand). How hot your hand is!

MAXWELL (dropping LINDA'S hand, and sitting back in the chair; in a matter-of-fact tone). At least, I was practically certain that you would.

KNOWLES comes along the path at the back, followed by CLONBARRY.

KNOWLES. Lord Clonbarry.

CLONBARRY (coming down the steps). How do you do?

MAXWELL. How do you do?

CLONBARRY. Your prediction has come true, you see.

MAXWELL (smiling). Don't apologise. I, too, am sometimes in earnest.

CLONBARRY (not quite clear, but smiling vaguely.) Ah-ha. How do you do, Miss Moore. (Going over to LILLAH.) Am I very late? . . . But I only got your wire at four o'clock.

LILLAH. Four! I hope you didn't kill anyone on the road.

CLONBARRY. I didn't feel anything. How do, Akermann? What brings you here?

AKERMANN (coolly). Well, Miss Blair was good enough to invite me . . . so I came.

LINDA (quickly). Bertie. (AKERMANN turns towards her.) Come here. (After a moment of hesitation, he strolls over to her.) (To MAXWELL, meantime.) He's perfectly silly about Lillah, you know. (To AKERMANN.) Don't be a donkey. You'll only worry Lillah. (Rising.) Come and help to keep the wopses off me.



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AKERMANN (*After another little hesitation*). All right, girlie.

MAXWELL (*as they go off along the path to the right*). You a golfer, Mr. Akermann?

AKERMANN. Yes . . . of sorts.

MAXWELL. You, Miss Moore?

LINDA. Oh, yes, I'm awfully keen about it. I mean to come down here for a week-end soon, you know.

LILLAH. Don't make any rash promises, Linda.

LINDA (*over her shoulder*). Why? You'll give me half your room, won't you?

LILLAH. All of it . . . after to-morrow.

*Her eyes rest on MAXWELL'S face for a moment, but he passes on with LINDA and AKERMANN.*

AKERMANN (*as they walk*). Miss Blair is leaving you, then, to-morrow?

MAXWELL. I don't know at all. I trust not. Look out, Miss Moore . . . here comes the first wops.

*They go out of sight along the path to the right.*

LILLAH *is now sitting on the seat nearest to the spectator, her cheek resting on her hand. CLONBARRY has been fidgeting with her clubs, which still lie beside the seat.*

CLONBARRY (*satisfied that the others are out of hearing, going behind LILLAH, and bending over her*). Well?

LILLAH (*listlessly*). Well?

CLONBARRY. Aren't you glad to see me?

LILLAH. Of course.

CLONBARRY (*with a grimace*). Of course!

LILLAH. I ought to be more . . . more demonstrative, I suppose . . . but it's so hot, isn't it? Come where I can see you. (*He comes round and seats himself beside her.*) I haven't seen you for a whole fortnight, you know. You're very thin. What have you been doing with yourself?

CLONBARRY. Thinking about you, chiefly.

LILLAH. Oh! (*Pause.*) Did you have a good Ascot?

CLONBARRY. I didn't go to Ascot.

LILLAH (*amazed*). You didn't? You *didn't*? My hat!

CLONBARRY. No. I didn't feel up to it somehow. I . . . I've had a rather funny fortnight of it, Lillah. (*A pause.*) And you?

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LILLAH. I've had rather a funny fortnight of it too. I don't think I've ever been so miserable in my life . . . or so happy.

CLONBARRY. How?

LILLAH. Ah-ha! . . . How?

CLONBARRY. You might have written to me.

LILLAH. I tried to, several times . . . but I didn't seem to have anything much to say to you . . . that would interest you.

CLONBARRY. Am I so stupid as all that?

LILLAH. Stupid? No. But. . . Suppose I had filled four pages with . . . with a description of the feelings inspired by sitting in an old-fashioned garden in the summer twilight? As a matter of fact, I couldn't describe them for nuts . . . but suppose I had tried to . . . just think how bored you would have been.

CLONBARRY. No.

LILLAH. Or of the exaltation aroused by making out laundry-lists for three helpless, lazy men.

CLONBARRY. I'm bound to say that that doesn't appeal to me so much as the twilight.

LILLAH. And yet it afforded me the most exquisite pleasure. "Exquisite" is the right word, isn't it?

CLONBARRY (*amused*). Why?

LILLAH. I don't know . . . but it did. And I've never been so glad that I could sing . . . although Mr. Maxwell did go to sleep one night . . . right under my eyes. But . . . in that funny old room in there (*nodding towards the house*) . . . in the evenings . . . sitting at the piano, almost in the dark . . . and singing to them . . . while they smoked the most abominable . . . pipes . . . it made me. . . . One evening I cried.

CLONBARRY. You extraordinary person!

LILLAH (*with a shrug and a little shake of her head*). That's why I didn't write to you. . . . (*Rising*.) I had nothing else to write about.

CLONBARRY (*after a pause*). Had you met Maxwell anywhere before?

LILLAH. No.

CLONBARRY. Or the others?

LILLAH. No.

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CLONBARRY. It was just a whim, then . . . a sudden fancy . . . your staying here?

LILLAH. Yes. (*A pause.*)

CLONBARRY. What sort of a chap is Maxwell? All right?

LILLAH. Oh, yes. One has got to know him well.

CLONBARRY. You do?

LILLAH. Oh . . . you needn't be in the least jealous, my dear boy. They've all been most awfully kind to me . . . Mr. Crane, particularly . . . but, so far as anything else is concerned . . . I might have been their grandmother.

CLONBARRY (*with an incredulous shake of his head*). Ah-ha!

LILLAH. Don't you believe me?

CLONBARRY. No.

LILLAH. No? Oh . . . what does it matter? I'm going away to-morrow. I shall probably never see any of them again.

CLONBARRY (*after a moment*). Why did you ask Akermann down here?

LILLAH. Why shouldn't I? I like him and he likes me.

CLONBARRY (*jealously*). He has told you so?

LILLAH (*calmly*). Dozens of times.

CLONBARRY. When you talk like that—— My God! I almost hate you!

LILLAH. So much the better—(*looking up at him calmly*) for both of us.

CLONBARRY. No, no . . . I don't mean that. (*Sitting down beside her and catching her hands. A little hoarsely.*) Ah, Lillah! . . . won't you ever care for me? No, don't take your hands away—that's not much of a favour to allow me. If you knew what a hell my life has been during these two weeks . . . if you knew how I've been longing even for a glimpse of you! Every day I've been on the point of coming down here to ask you to come away from this place. I haven't slept a wink for the last three nights, thinking about you.

LILLAH (*brutally*). Thinking what?

CLONBARRY. Wondering what you were doing . . . and why you were here—here with these three utter strangers—three men whom you'd never seen before—

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whom you knew nothing of. What was I to think? What could I think, except that you were tired of me and that you wanted to throw me over? When I got your wire to-day, asking me to come down, I felt as if I had wakened out of a nightmare.

LILLAH (*impatiently*). Oh, rubbish!

CLONBARRY. Upon my honour! That's just the way I felt. I had made up my mind that I was going to lose you—that there was something between you and this chap Maxwell. . . . I can't get that idea out of my head, even now. There is . . . there must be!

LILLAH (*angrily*). There is nothing.

CLONBARRY. Nothing? On your word?

LILLAH. Nothing. And it's contemptible even to have thought of such a thing. My goodness gracious, if there were I should tell you straight out. I'm not afraid of you.

*There is a little silence.*

CLONBARRY (*after a long stare at her*). Look here, Lillums. (*He goes close to her.*) Will you marry me?

LILLAH (*after a silent stare at him*). Marry you? Do you mean that, Cecil?

CLONBARRY. Yes. I know in your heart of hearts you think I'm a selfish blackguard.

LILLAH. No, no!

CLONBARRY. Yes, you do. Why shouldn't you? I'm not. . . . I want you to believe that I'm not. Marry me, Lillums. . . . (LILLAH *shakes her head slowly*.) (*Coaxingly*.) Yes . . . you will.

LILLAH. No . . . I won't. If you were the only man in the world I wouldn't marry you. (*A little pause.*) I'm prepared to keep to my bargain with you . . . if you ask it of me. But I won't marry you.

CLONBARRY. Because . . . . Because I was cad enough to make the bargain with you?

LILLAH (*with a shrug*). Partly. But there are heaps of other reasons. (*A pause.*) I suppose this is what has prevented you from sleeping? You've been trying to screw up your courage to ask me to marry you . . . and you've been afraid of your life that I should say Yes.

CLONBARRY. Isn't that rather ungenerous?

LILLAH (*turning on him with a little flash of passion*). Isn't it true?

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CLONBARRY. No. Before God, no. I love you . . . I adore you. You are the only thing I want in life.

LILLAH. Well . . . you can have me—on the hire system. Now—(*sharply*) let us never talk about this again. You understand?

CLONBARRY (*after a moment, with a shrug*). As you please. You leave here to-morrow, you say?

LILLAH. Yes.

CLONBARRY. Why not leave to-day? (*A pause.*) There's plenty of room in the car for your luggage. Why not leave to-day?

LILLAH. To-day?

CLONBARRY. How long would it take you to pack?

LILLAH. Oh, not very long.

CLONBARRY. Nonsense. Miss Moore and Miss Trevelyan would help you, I'm sure. I'd help myself . . . If you'd let me.

LILLAH. Won't it seem rather ungracious?

CLONBARRY. What do you care? I shan't be happy . . . I can't be happy until I've got you out of this.

LILLAH. Will you . . . will you give me a little while to think it over?

CLONBARRY. How long? (*MAXWELL comes along the path from the right.*) An hour?

LILLAH (*with decision, rising*). Five minutes.

MAXWELL. Miss Blair, do you know that you are neglecting your duties as hostess most disgracefully?

LILLAH. Am I? I'm sorry.

MAXWELL. Mr. Akermann is so offended that he's gone away.

LILLAH. Gone away?

CLONBARRY (*amused*). Are you serious?

MAXWELL. Quite. I did my best . . . I took him into the house and gave him my views on State Insurance, and two large drinks . . . but he only got more and more offended . . . So I had to let him go.

LILLAH. Silly boy!

MAXWELL. Er . . . the others talk of strolling across the links . . . (*To CLONBARRY.*) Perhaps you'd like to join them?

CLONBARRY. Yes. Certainly.

MAXWELL. I have suggested that they should dine

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here . . . and go back to town in the cool of the evening.

LILLAH. And will they?

MAXWELL. Yes.

LILLAH (to CLONBARRY). Good . . . You'll stay too, won't you?

CLONBARRY. Oh, really . . . (To MAXWELL.) It's too kind of you. Are you sure I shan't be . . .

MAXWELL. Quite sure . . . Very well. (Turning to go back to the garden.) You'll find us somewhere on the links.

LILLAH. Just a moment, Mr. Maxwell. (To CLONBARRY.) Go and ask Grace and Linda to wait for me. Tell them I've some important domestic arrangements to make . . . I shan't be long.

CLONBARRY. Five minutes?

LILLAH (meeting his eyes). Yes.

CLONBARRY. All right. I shall come and look for you in five minutes.

(He turns and goes off along the path at the right.)

MAXWELL. I sincerely trust that Knowles will prove equal to the occasion.

LILLAH. I . . . I think we . . . I think you ought to borrow one of Mrs. Duncan's maids. Would you mind very much?

MAXWELL. Not at all. Certainly. Shall I . . .

LILLAH. No. Don't you bother. I'll scribble a note to her.

MAXWELL. What about ice? There's none in the house, is there?

LILLAH. Yes, I ordered some this morning. (After a moment.) Was Mr. Akermann really offended at my not going to pour out tea for him?

MAXWELL. I'm afraid so. Mr. Akermann apparently takes you quite seriously.

LILLAH. I wish you would . . . Ah! . . . there's something gone down my neck. (She raises an uneasy hand.)

MAXWELL (placidly). Is there? It's probably only an earwig.

LILLAH (with a little squeal). An earwig! Oh! do take it away, will you? (He regards her with an unmoved smile.) (Piteously.) Will you? Will you?

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MAXWELL (*sternly*). Come here. (*She goes over to him.*) Turn around. (*She turns around.*) Bend your head. (*She bends her head.*)

LILLAH. Do you see anything? Oh, do tell me.

MAXWELL. I see . . . I see a very white neck and the beginning of a very white garment of some kind or other . . . There's nothing else of any importance visible.

LILLAH. You're sure?

MAXWELL. Absolutely. However, in case any enterprising insect may have penetrated into more remote sanctuaries . . . (*He blows a cloud of cigarette smoke down her neck.*)

LILLAH. Oh!

MAXWELL. That may kill it . . . or may possibly merely infuriate it.

LILLAH (*uncomfortably*). I suppose I shall know very soon. I think, on the whole, the fauna and flora of town suit me better. The animals in the country are too ferocious. (*Very casually.*) I'm going back to town to-night, you know.

MAXWELL (*glancing over at her, and noting that she is intensely absorbed in a rose which she has taken from the basket; placidly*). There will be a full moon to-night. You will have a very pleasant drive.

LILLAH (*visibly depressed by his reception of her announcement*). When I say going, I mean I think I'm going.

MAXWELL. I know.

LILLAH (*desperately*). I mean . . . it's almost certain that I shall go . . . but I haven't quite made up my mind.

MAXWELL. I know.

LILLAH (*rising*). No, please don't laugh at me. It . . . it hurts me. (*A pause.*) I should like to stay on very much . . . if it were possible . . . but . . .

MAXWELL (*formally*). I'm sure we should all be . . .

LILLAH. No, no. Don't bother to be polite. You see . . . in the first place, there's Miss Hawes and the young men of Etterby to think about . . . and in the second place . . . Lord Clonbarry has asked me to go back with him.

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MAXWELL (*after a moment, levelly*). Well . . . I think you're quite right to do whatever he asks you to do.

LILLAH. You really think so?

MAXWELL. I do. As far as I have been able to discover, he is a very good fellow—devotedly attached to you . . . devotedly. (LILLAH gazes at him in helpless despair.) And . . . as far as I have been able to discover . . . you are . . . a very sensible young woman.

LILLAH (*with something very like a sneer*). What a judge of character you are! But then, of course, that is part of your stock-in-trade.

MAXWELL (*unruffled*). Why should you dislike being thought sensible? You know what the things are that make life pleasant, or, at all events, endurable. They're offered to you . . . and you take them. Every sane woman would. The worry is that in nine cases out of ten the offer doesn't come along. But here's a real Fairy Prince—young, rich and handsome, and devotedly attached to you . . .

LILLAH (*seriously*). He is . . . you know. I've found that out. (*There is a little pause.*) He has asked me to marry him.

MAXWELL. Indeed? Well . . . I rejoice that your visit to The Barn has had one satisfactory result, at all events.

LILLAH. Satisfactory?

MAXWELL. Yes. I think your idea was a most ingenious one. It would have been a thousand pities had it failed to work out in accordance with your expectations.

LILLAH (*icily*). You mean . . . that I have made use of The Barn to . . . to trick Lord Clonbarry into marrying me?

MAXWELL. Honestly . . . that was your idea, was it not?

LILLAH stares at him for a moment, then laughs hopelessly. The laugh fades, and her eyes rest on him again in a long, searching scrutiny, while her fingers play idly with the rose. She hums a little, stops, looks down at the rose, hums a little again, raises her eyes to his face again, rises, walks slowly over to him, and throws the rose at him. All the time, he regards her with the same half-stern, half-amused look.



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CLONBARRY and CRANE come along the path from the right.

CRANE. Now then, Miss Blair . . . we're all waiting for you, you know.

LILLAH (*listlessly*). I'm coming . . . I'm coming.

LEWIS comes running down the steps at the back, with an enormous Panama.

LEWIS. Thought I'd better get something shadier in the way of a hat.

LILLAH (*to CLONBARRY*). I shan't be able to go very far. You know I must pack before dinner.

CLONBARRY, *controlling himself with difficulty, slips his arm through hers and draws her off along the path to the right. She laughs a little recklessly, but makes no resistance.*

CRANE and LEWIS stare after them until they have disappeared. LEWIS comes down the steps and stands behind CRANE. They transfer the stare to MAXWELL.

MAXWELL (*at length, with unmistakable viciousness, but very quietly*). Go to the devil—both of you.

*They turn and go out by the path to the right.*

CRANE (*to LEWIS, as they go out quietly*). Still falling.

Left alone, MAXWELL remains quite still for a moment, then begins to whistle. Pulls up his socks. As he does so, his eyes fall on LILLAH'S rose. He reaches out a foot and draws it slowly towards him, stoops down, picks it up, tosses it into the basket, and walks slowly up the steps towards the house. Halfway up the steps he halts, hesitates, comes back, and taking the rose out of the basket, places it in the pocket of LILLAH'S golf bag, and once more goes up the steps towards the house.

END OF ACT II.

## ACT III.

*The Scene represents the drawing-room at The Barn.*

LINDA, *in hat and coat, is seated at the piano, one hand fiddling idly with the keys, the other resting on the back of the seat.*

MAXWELL *is-sitting in an armchair at the other side of the room.*

*The time is between eight and nine o'clock in the evening of the same day. As the action of the Act progresses, the light gradually fails.*

LINDA (*after a moment*). Don't you?

MAXWELL. Pardon?

LINDA. Don't you find it rather dull here in the winter?

MAXWELL (*absently*). Dull?

LINDA. I mean . . . of course, in the summer it's awfully jolly . . . but in winter . . . when the daylight goes at four o'clock?

MAXWELL (*still absently*). Yes. (*Rousing himself with an effort to conversational intelligence.*) I haven't spent a winter here yet, as a matter of fact. Indeed, I haven't spent a winter in England for many years. I go away in September, as a rule.

LINDA. Yes.

MAXWELL. On the evening of the first wet day in September, after dinner, Knowles comes in and lays a Bradshaw solemnly on my writing table, and says, "The summer's gone, sir, I think." He invariably uses the same words, and we invariably leave The Barn the following day.

LINDA. How lovely! Do you take him with you?

MAXWELL. Always. Knowles has been all over the world with me. He's a great old sportsman. . . .

LINDA. Really? (*Pettishly.*) I wish you'd look at me when you talk to me.

MAXWELL (*surprised for a moment*). Eh? What?

LINDA. Look at me when you talk to me. . . . You

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keep looking at nothing. It makes me feel as if I wasn't in the room.

MAXWELL (*good-humouredly*). Oh! Now. Is that better? (*He swings round his chair so as to face her.*) What were we talking about? Can you remember?

LINDA (*laughing despite herself*). What a man! You were telling me about Mr. Knowles.

MAXWELL. Oh, yes . . . Knowles. Yes. He's a most excellent fellow, Knowles.

LINDA. Look at me . . . Look at me.

MAXWELL. He has only one little weakness! He refuses point-blank to speak a word of any language but his own. German, Russian, Chinese or Arab, he tackles them all in honest Anglo-Saxon. He looks them blandly in the face—and says, "Look here." And they go and do it . . . that's the amusing part of it.

LINDA. The brutal, overbearing Britisher! Well, I suppose someone must be boss . . . and it might as well be us. Are you an Imperialist or a Vegetarian? (*She affects to be searching for something amongst the music on the piano.*)

MAXWELL (*after a glance*). Neither.

LINDA. You're not? Are you anything? (*Coming across to him.*) Do you take an interest in anything?

MAXWELL. Just now?

LINDA. Yes, just now. Are you looking at my hair? Is it very untidy? I washed it this morning.

MAXWELL (*solemnly*). You have very beautiful hair. (*A pause.*) I washed mine this morning also.

*They look at one another, measuring one another up.*

*LINDA bends down suddenly, and before he can evade her, catches his head between her hands.*

LINDA (*with a certain animal passion*). I like you horribly.

MAXWELL (*coolly, rising and putting her hands away*). I'm sorry, but you mustn't.

LINDA (*edging close to him*). Why not?

MAXWELL. Because I don't like you at all.

LINDA. That's rather brutal, isn't it?

MAXWELL. I mean . . . that way.

LINDA (*after a pause, looking at him from under her eyelashes, and edging closer to him*). Not a scrap?

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MAXWELL. Not a scrap.

LILLAH and GRACE enter the room.

LINDA (moving away hastily, but a little too late). Hello! There you are at last. Finished?

LILLAH. Very nearly. (To GRACE.) That writing-case . . . and the gloves.

*She avoids looking at MAXWELL. She and GRACE go about the room collecting odds and ends—novels, gloves, a purse, music, and so forth. KNOWLES enters the room.*

MAXWELL. Can I be of any assistance?

LILLAH (frigidly). Oh, thank you, please don't trouble.

KNOWLES. Beg pardon, miss. Are your trunks ready to come down?

LILLAH. I'm afraid they're not quite ready yet. At least . . . only one is ready.

MAXWELL (taking up three golf balls which are lying on one of the tables). I think these are your property, Miss Blair? Three "Colonels."

LILLAH (whose hands are full.) Oh, yes. Thank you. Grace, do you mind putting them in my bag?

GRACE nods, and, taking the balls from MAXWELL, goes over to where LILLAH's bag lies on a chair, and proceeds to open the pocket.

KNOWLES (who has lingered with a certain persistency in his air.) Mr. Stein seems anxious to make a start as soon as possible, miss.

GRACE (who has overheard). Oh, rubbish. Mr. Stein can wait.

KNOWLES (ignoring her absolutely). Mr. Stein is taking part of your luggage in his car, miss, I understand?

LILLAH. Yes.

KNOWLES. In that case, miss, perhaps we might get down the trunk that is packed.

LILLAH (smiling). Very well . . . if you are in such a violent hurry to get rid of me.

*She turns away from KNOWLES and goes across to take some music from the piano.*

MAXWELL. Knowles.

KNOWLES (going over to where MAXWELL is standing). Yes, sir.

MAXWELL (sotto voce). Get to blazes.

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KNOWLES. Yes, sir. [He goes out.]

GRACE. Hello! What's this? *(As she finds the rose in the pocket of LILLAH'S bag.)* You taken up botany, Lillums?

LILLAH *(at the piano)*. Botany? No.

GRACE. There's a rose, or, rather, the remains of a rose, in the pocket of your bag. Such a funny place to put it.

LILLAH. A rose?

*She comes across to GRACE, who hands her the rose.*

*She stands for a moment twisting it about in her fingers. MAXWELL looks at her curiously.*

LILLAH *(smiling hardily)*. Poor old thing! Its little day is done. What do roses mean? Pansies for thoughts. What are roses for, Mr. Maxwell?

MAXWELL. Second thoughts, perhaps.

LILLAH *(mockingly)*. So soon? *(She tosses the rose away and turns icily to LINDA.)* Do you know where Cecil is?

LINDA. Cecil? In the garden, I think? *(She turns for confirmation to MAXWELL.)*

MAXWELL. Cecil? Oh . . . Lord Clonbarry. *(Turning to LILLAH.)*

LILLAH *(still icily)*. Yes.

MAXWELL. Yes. He's out in the garden . . . counting the minutes, I have no doubt. *(Gently, to himself, as he goes towards the window.)*

The King was in his parlour counting out his money,  
The Queen was in her—

*(Turning.)* I'm going out there. Shall I send him to you?

LILLAH. No, but perhaps you would kindly tell him that we have very nearly finished . . . that we shall be ready to start in . . . *(she looks interrogatively at GRACE)* ten minutes? . . . *(To MAXWELL.)* A quarter of an hour.

GRACE. Better say twenty minutes.

MAXWELL. All right. Half-an-hour. I'll tell him.

*[He saunters out through the window.]*

LILLAH. Thank you.

LINDA. I'm afraid I haven't been much help, Lillums. But you know I loathe packing. *(Yawning.)* I often

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wonder how on earth I used to manage without a maid in the old days.

LILLAH. Ah well, Linda, we didn't have much to pack in the old days, any of us. Still, I agree that life without a maid to look after one's clothes is . . . very nearly as bad as life without a man to pay for them.

GRACE. Oh dear!

LILLAH (*trying on the hat, which she has carried in in her hand, at the mirror*). I hate both of them—maids and men. Simplicity and innocence, that's what my soul craves for. Fine thinking and fig-leaves. I shouldn't be surprised if I joined a religious order, some day . . . when I begin to go off a bit. I rather fancy myself in this hat, though. I *want* something big and shady. After all . . . fig-leaves must be trying.

LINDA. No more trying than fine thinking, dear.

LILLAH. No. That's as futile an occupation as writing love-letters to one self. And, anyhow (*pitching down the hat*) anything who's serious about anyone is a bore.

LINDA. Hear, hear!

GRACE. Cheer up, old girl.

LILLAH. Thanks; I'm quite cheerful.

GRACE. You don't look it.

LILLAH. Don't I. I'm sure I look very hot. I thought we should never have fitted all those things into those two wretched trunks.

LINDA. Have you and Cecil made it up, then, Lillah?

LILLAH (*sharply*). Made it up?

LINDA. We thought there had been a little disagreement of some sort. We weren't quite sure whether to blame Mr. Akermann . . . or (*smiling significantly*) some one else. (*LILLAH makes no reply.*)

GRACE (*having waited to give her an opportunity of doing so*). Poor Mr. Akermann! I hope he won't do anything very desperate. He told me to-day that you had absolutely no heart, and that your eyes were the cruellest he had ever seen. (*Singing.*) Oh, this love, this love!

LILLAH. Thank heaven, it hasn't given any of us much trouble.

*There is dead silence. LINDA and GRACE glance at one another. LINDA laughs. LILLAH turns and*

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looks at her quickly, then at GRACE. GRACE laughs. LILLAH goes on gathering her music, looks up to find them both smiling at her. LINDA comes over to GRACE; they put their arms about one another and continue to regard her smilingly. LILLAH affects to ignore them. GRACE whispers to LINDA.

LINDA. Oh, no. I don't think so.

GRACE. Oh, yes. (*She whispers again.*)

LINDA. Yes. I did notice that.

GRACE. Of course you did. (*She whispers again.*)

LINDA. But why is she so very cold and distant with him? I should have thought that if she . . . if she really *did*, you know . . .

GRACE. Rubbish! (*She whispers again.*) Wouldn't you?

LINDA. I suppose I should. (*She laughs. She whispers something to GRACE.*)

GRACE. The unhappier they are, the more enjoyable they are.

LINDA. But perhaps he really cares for her, too.

GRACE. I don't think so. I hope not. That would spoil everything.

*LILLAH has seated herself, and at this point blows her nose gently. They affect not to see her.*

LINDA. He's rather nice.

GRACE. Yes. But he's got no money.

(*LINDA whispers. GRACE whispers.*)

LINDA (*laughing*). I asked him.

GRACE (*laughing*). You asked him? What did he say?

LINDA. He said that—(*Laughs. GRACE begins to laugh.*) he . . . he said that (*laughs*) he had lent her his . . . his . . . his . . . (*She whispers the last word. They both laugh helplessly.*)

*LILLAH bursts into tears. They run over to her and put their arms about her, sitting one on each side of her.*

GRACE. There, there!

LINDA. Lillums! Lillums!

LILLAH (*crying*). Wh . . . a . . . at?

LINDA. We want to know something.

LILLAH (*crying*). Wha . . . a . . . at?

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LINDA. Look here . . . the first night you came here . . . what did you . . . (*She laughs.*)

GRACE. What did you . . . (*She laughs.*)

LINDA. What did you sleep in?

LILLAH (*crying*). Mr. Maxwell lent me a suit of p...pyjamas. Why?

LINDA and GRACE jump up in an ecstasy of delight. When they have recovered a little, they re-seat themselves beside her. Each lays a cheek to one of hers; each dries an eye with her handkerchief.

LINDA. Poooooo...oor Lillums!

GRACE. Pooooooooooooo...oor old Lillums!

LINDA. Hard-hearted, cruel-eyed, cynical Lillums!

GRACE. Never mind, dear. It won't last. It never does.

STEIN, evidently in bad humour, enters the room followed by CRANE.

STEIN (*irritably*). Look here... (*To GRACE.*) Are you coming, or are you not?

GRACE. We're ready. We've been waiting for you.

STEIN (*angrily*). Nonsense ... Why, I sent you in word half-an-hour ago.

LEWIS enters the room.

GRACE. Oh, well ... don't be so cross. I have been helping Lillah.

STEIN (*surlily*). Have you finished helping her?

GRACE. Yes.

LINDA says good-bye to CRANE and LEWIS.

STEIN. Well, then, come along. (*To LILLAH.*) I've got your trunk, Miss Blair. I'll have it sent over to you in the morning.

LILLAH. Thank you. Any time.

LINDA. *Au revoir*, Lillums. [*She goes out.*]

STEIN (*grabbing GRACE by the arm*). Now! (*Pulling her towards the door.*) Good-bye, Mr. Crane. Good-bye, Mr. Lewis.

CRANE. Good-bye.

LEWIS. Good-bye.

GRACE (*over her shoulder*). I'll look you up to-morrow, Lillums—some time round five.

LILLAH. Very well.

GRACE (*waving her hand to CRANE and LEWIS*). Bye-bye. [*SHE and STEIN go out.*]



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LEWIS (*drawing a breath of relief*). Puff! Well, Miss Blair, you're really leaving us, I hear.

LILLAH. Really leaving you.

LEWIS. Dear me, that's very sad. Very sad.

CRANE. What about the Red Spot, I should like to know?

LILLAH. I'm afraid you must look out for another model . . . less attractive, of course, but, I hope, more reliable.

LEWIS. Red Spot? What's that?

CRANE. A new ball I've got to do a poster for. I'd fixed it all up . . . Miss Blair at the top of her swing, about to hit a red spot—with the red spot carefully displayed—into the middle of next week. I'd selected her pose, her dress, the background, everything . . . and here she's going away and leaving me with a certainly broken heart and a probably broken contract. (*To LILLAH.*) It's too bad of you, really it is.

LEWIS. And I had intended to propose to you next week. I bought a new tie this morning specially for the purpose. And now . . . I've given it to Knowles. Oh, cruel, cruel and too fair one, why didst thou come to disturb the peace of this once 'appy 'ome!

LILLAH (*growing rather restive*). Oh, chuck it!

LEWIS. Pardon?

LILLAH (*sharply*). Chuck it; I'm not in humour for chaffing this evening.

CRANE (*smiling at her rather angrily back*). And my Alfred Stone? (*To LEWIS.*) I was going to do an Alfred Stone, you know. . . . Miss Blair in a high waist and reflective attitude, leaning against the sundial in the gloaming. I intended to call it "Her First Divorce." It would have made my fortune.

LILLAH. If you don't stop I shall get angry.

CRANE. Before that horrible threat (*sitting down beside LEWIS on the sofa*) I quail. Don't get angry with us. If we must part, let us part good friends. If you will turn your head just three-quarters of an inch to the left, so as to get the light from the window on your cheekbone . . . and tell us that we part good friends.

LILLAH (*coldly*). Mr. Crane, I'm quite sure that you don't wish to annoy me, and that this . . . not very

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successful attempt at pleasantry is prompted by the very best of intentions . . .

CRANE. Hear, hear!

LILLAH. I'm afraid, however, that we have all of us allowed ourselves to forget—perhaps a little too easily—the fact that we are really utter strangers . . .

CRANE. Shame! shame!

LILLAH (*growing angrier and angrier*). I should hate to appear in any way ungrateful for the kindness which you and Mr. Lewis have shown me since I came here . . . but I really cannot suppose that you expect my gratitude to run to the toleration of something very like impertinence.

LEWIS (*mildly expostulatory*). Oh, why "run to"? Why not "extend to"? "Run to" is so colloquial, isn't it?

CRANE (*after a moment's contemplation of her*). Just a moment.

*He jumps up, searches amongst some books and papers on the table, finds a sketch-book, and comes back to the sofa, taking a pencil from his pocket as he does so.*

Yes. All right. Very nice indeed. This is a new Miss Blair . . . if I'm not very much mistaken, *the* Miss Blair. Please continue . . . or, if you prefer, *da capo*.

LEWIS (*rising*). Perhaps it might help you if I played an obbligato.

*He goes over to the piano and seats himself in an attitude of expectancy.*

LILLAH (*who has looked from one to the other in silence*). I suppose it is a confession of feminine weakness, but I would give quite a good deal to know just what you both mean.

CRANE (*putting in her pose with a few rapid lines*). Mean?

LEWIS. Mean? (*He plays an ascending arpeggio*). Nothing. (*He plays two chords in the rhythm of the word*). Absolutely nothing. (*He plays an expansion of the preceding chords*.)

LILLAH (*smiling hardly*). Oh, yes.

LEWIS. Nothing. (*He plays another elaboration of the phrase*.)

LILLAH. You've both avoided me in the most marked

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way the whole evening. You're doing your very best at present to be nasty to me. There must be some reason. It's almost too childish . . . but—are you annoyed because I'm going away so . . . so abruptly?

CRANE. No.

LILLAH. You are.

CRANE (*after a pause*). I think you might have given us a little warning. I mean . . . it's rather an off-hand way of doing things, isn't it? Of course we recognise the fact that you are a wayward, capricious, impulsive young person, who has apparently always been allowed to do just as she pleased when she pleased . . . and, of course, it's very amusing and all that.

LILLAH (*checking a smile*). But you knew that my visit was only to last a fortnight, and that the fortnight was up to-morrow. (*A pause.*) You also knew that I should never have come here at all . . . that I simply forced myself on Mr. Maxwell . . . and that really the best atonement I could make for my most unwarrantable invasion of his hearth and home was to cut it as short as . . . as I could persuade myself to. (*A pause.*) So that that can't be the real reason of those very unbecoming furrows in your brow, Jimbi.

LEWIS. Still . . . you could have told Maxwell . . . well, even earlier in the day.

LILLAH. I didn't know, myself. (*A pause.*) Besides, so far as Mr. Maxwell is concerned, he is quite resigned to my departure . . . almost cheerful, in fact.

CRANE. Cheerful! He's furious.

LILLAH. Is he? Poor dear! However, Mr. Maxwell and his temper . . . which, I should say, is about the worst in Europe, are quite beside the question. What I can't understand is, why you two good-natured, amiable creatures should suddenly become so grumpy and so unfriendly. I don't suppose we shall meet again . . . I almost hope not. What's the use of spoiling this last evening? (*A pause.*) If there is a skeleton in the cupboard . . . for goodness sake let us have it out and look at it.

*There is a silence. LEWIS fiddles with the keys of the piano. CRANE scribbles aimlessly over the cover of his sketch-book.*

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CRANE. I . . . Ah . . . (*He scribbles for a moment longer, throws down the sketch-book, and, rising abruptly, walks over to the window.*) I think Clonbarry is rather an ass.

LEWIS (*simply*). So do I.

LILLAH. Oh! So that's it. (*A pause.*) Lord Clonbarry has been a very good and kind friend to me.

CRANE. I don't care a damn. I don't like him.

LEWIS. He's an ass . . . To judge from his eyes, addicted to consuming more than his fair share of wild oats.

LILLAH. Well . . . but what on earth has that got to do with you?

LEWIS (*dully*). Oh, nothing much. Except that . . . well, speaking personally, I have the audacity to be rather fond of you . . . all of us are, I think, and . . . er . . . well, frankly, Clonbarry is a disappointment. I'm sure he's a good enough chap in his way . . . but . . . oh, hang it all, he's an awful ass . . . the last man on earth I should have supposed you would have thought of marrying.

LILLAH (*after a pause. Deliberately*). I have never thought of marrying Lord Clonbarry. (*CRANE turns towards her.*) Or, rather, to be more strictly truthful, so far as I know, Lord Clonbarry has never thought of marrying me.

CRANE. Then what the devil . . . (*He stops abruptly.*)

LILLAH. Ask Mr. Maxwell, when I've gone. And now, I know. (*She goes over and, catching their sleeves, pulls them gently to and fro.*) You're fond of me . . . and a little jealous . . . and I'm glad. And I want you to remember always . . . no matter what you hear about me, that, after one other man, you are the two people in the world that I love best. Now I must run away and finish my packing; it's getting very late. Give me a kiss, Jimbi.

*She holds up her face and CRANE kisses her gravely on the forehead. She laughs a little, and kisses*  
LEWIS.

LILLAH (*turning away from them*). Please don't let me see you again: hide yourselves until I've cleared out.

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*(She gathers up the odds and ends which she had collected from about the room, and goes towards the door, brushing her hand across her eyes.)*

Good-bye. [She goes out.]

*There is silence for a few moments. CRANE and LEWIS are plainly busy with their thoughts.*

LEWIS. I say, what is that fellow Stein?

CRANE. He's a brother of Solly Stein's, and a partner in the firm. He's a well-known racing man. Why?

LEWIS. I was just wondering in precisely what relation he stood to Miss Trevelyan.

CRANE *(with a shrug)*. I don't think that's very difficult to guess. *(A pause. As LEWIS's meaning makes itself clear to him.)* Dear heaven, you don't suggest. . . . You don't think. . . .

*(They stare at one another in consternation.)*

LEWIS. I don't know what I think. All I know is that I feel absurdly miserable. At any rate, she doesn't want to see us again: I suppose we'd better get out of the way. Stroll down as far as the station with me, will you? I left my stick behind me in the carriage to-day. The station-master was to make enquiries about it.

CRANE. Very well. *(He holds out his cigarette-case to LEWIS.)*

LEWIS. No, thanks, old chap.

CRANE *(lighting a cigarette)*. I tell you what it is, Billy. If I believed that Clonbarry was that particular kind of rotter . . . I don't believe it . . . but if I did . . . I'd wring his confounded neck.

*He throws away the cigarette which he has just lighted, and raises the match to his lips. Discovering his mistake, he takes out his cigarette-case mechanically, and lights another cigarette. The match breaks; he strikes another; for some reason the cigarette refuses to draw.*

*(Angrily throwing the second cigarette after the first.)*

Damnation!

MAXWELL *(in the hall)*. Ah . . . Knowles! Knowles! *(He comes in.)* *(To CRANE.)* Where is Miss Blair?

CRANE. Gone to finish her packing.

MAXWELL. Good. *(As KNOWLES enters the room.)* Ah . . . Knowles. I have some rather important busi-

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ness to discuss with Lord Clonbarry. I am not to be disturbed by anyone, on any account. You understand?

KNOWLES. Yes, sir. Here, sir?

MAXWELL. Here. You will wait in the hall until Lord Clonbarry leaves this room. If, as I think is very probable, he should ask you where his chauffeur is, you will say that you don't know.

KNOWLES. Yes, sir.

MAXWELL. He will then most probably ask you to show him where his car has been put. You will take him out and show him the coach-house.

KNOWLES. Yes, Sir.

MAXWELL. The coach-house door is at present locked, and the key is in the door—on the outside.

KNOWLES. Yes, sir.

MAXWELL. You will unlock the door for Lord Clonbarry. You will, naturally, stand aside to allow him to go in . . . and when he has gone in, you will lock the door.

KNOWLES. Yes, sir.

MAXWELL. And bring me the key. Where is the chauffeur by the way?

KNOWLES. In the kitchen, with the housemaid, sir.

MAXWELL. Happy?

KNOWLES. Going strong, sir,

MAXWELL. Well, in case the attractions of the housemaid should pall, you might supplement them by whatever form of liquid refreshment the gentleman particularly favours.

KNOWLES. Yes, sir.

MAXWELL. That's all . . . for the present.

KNOWLES. Yes, sir. [*He turns and goes out.*]

MAXWELL (*smiling as he turns to CRANE and LEWIS, who have listened in rather puzzled silence*). And now, dear children, as the business which I have to discuss with our guest is of a very unpleasant kind, I'm going to ask you to amuse yourselves in some other place for a little while.

LEWIS. Well . . . as a matter of fact, we had intended to walk down to the station. That do?

MAXWELL. That will do nicely. You needn't walk too quickly.

CRANE (*as he goes to the door*). I suppose I'm not mad or drunk, am I?

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MAXWELL. I'll tell you all about it, some time—perhaps.

CRANE. Come along, Billy.

LEWIS, *on his way to the door, stops and is on the point of saying something to MAXWELL; he changes his mind, however, and goes out after CRANE.*

*Left alone, MAXWELL walks about the room, whistling softly; he stops once or twice to listen; hearing the sound of approaching footsteps, he seats himself facing the door, a certain determination in his air.*

CLONBARRY *enters the room, carrying his hat and a light overcoat.*

MAXWELL. Miss Blair is not quite ready yet.

CLONBARRY. Woman, woman! (*Putting down his coat and hat.*) What a charming view you have from your upper windows. What's that big house amongst the trees, beyond the village?

MAXWELL. That's Sir Arthur Pavenham's place—Etterby Chase.

CLONBARRY. Oh, indeed? I knew Pavenham at Oxford. You're an Oxford man, aren't you?

MAXWELL. No.

CLONBARRY. Oh. Cambridge?

MAXWELL. No.

CLONBARRY (*surprised*). Oh!

MAXWELL. You see, just about the time when I should have been assimilating the delicate atmosphere of a university, I was a full-blown private in the Canadian Mounted Police.

CLONBARRY. Indeed.

MAXWELL. I may mention—in order that you may realise what a very unacademic person I am—that before attaining that position of comparative respectability, I had been a bar-tender, a stoker, a cattleman, part proprietor of a travelling circus, and various other equally indelicate and unclassical things, ranging from journalist to common or garden tramp. I regret that I didn't have time for a university training . . . I'm afraid, even, that I shouldn't have had the least use for one. I hope that dreadful confession doesn't shock you?

CLONBARRY. Shock me! My dear Mr. Maxwell . . .

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I am a man of the world. I take men and women as I find them. I had no idea that you had had such a very adventurous career. It seems curious that you should elect to settle down in this quiet, humdrum little place.

MAXWELL (*smiling*). If one desires adventures, one can always meet with them . . . even in quiet, humdrum little places like this.

CLONBARRY. Indeed?

MAXWELL. Yes.

CLONBARRY (*smiling*). Uninvited guests, for instance? Do they count as adventurers? (*Laughing.*) Certainly, this escapade of Miss Blair's would have seemed to me the most extraordinary of adventures if I had been in your place.

MAXWELL (*slowly*). It might have seemed so to me, too . . . if Miss Blair had not given me . . . some inkling . . . of the reasons which prompted her to it.

CLONBARRY (*after a pause*). She has done so?

MAXWELL. She has done so. And, frankly, I find the reasons for the escapade more extraordinary than the escapade itself. So extraordinary that, if I did not believe Miss Blair to be incapable of the least deviation from the truth, I should be tempted to regard them as an artistic fiction.

CLONBARRY (*a little ill at ease*). My dear Mr. Maxwell, you're a man of the world. You know what women are. Miss Blair, like most of her charming sex, has her moments of caprice, moments in which she does things without any definite aim or purpose. She was a bit fagged out . . . as you will easily believe, her work at the theatre is extremely arduous . . . extremely so . . . and involves a very considerable amount of strain and anxiety, and . . . at the end of the season, naturally—well, naturally, one thinks of a holiday in the country—rest and quiet and all that. So far as I know, that is the only reason she had. She wanted a quiet holiday. (*He pauses, somewhat disconcerted by MAXWELL'S steady stare.*) And it was most awfully good of you to have her here, most awfully good.

MAXWELL (*deliberately*). You think there was nothing more than that?

CLONBARRY. Well . . . I really don't see what more



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there could be. Unless (*with the faintest possible suggestion of a sneer*) you suppose that Miss Blair fell violently in love with you at first sight . . . which, at the risk of appearing discourteous, I am bound to say appears to me, knowing her as I do, an extremely unlikely hypothesis.

MAXWELL (*drily*). The hypothesis is yours . . . and, I agree, may be regarded as highly unlikely. Besides (*with, also, the faintest suspicion of a sneer*) it would surely imply an undeserved mistrust in the strength of your own claims on Miss Blair's regard.

CLONBARRY (*losing his temper*). My claims?

MAXWELL (*quietly*). Yes. I take it that you are engaged to Miss Blair. You are, are you not?

CLONBARRY. Forgive me for saying so, but I really fail to see what right you have to put such a question to me.

MAXWELL. In other words . . . you are not.

CLONBARRY. I repeat, you have no right . . .

MAXWELL. Right be damned! Are you?

CLONBARRY (*angrily*). No. I am not.

MAXWELL. Do you profess to have any claims whatever against Miss Blair's liberty of action?

CLONBARRY. No.

MAXWELL. Thank you . . . That's all I wanted to know.

CLONBARRY. When I say no . . . (*He hesitates.*)

MAXWELL. You mean yes?

CLONBARRY (*controlling himself, and walking a little about the room*). It's a very difficult thing to put into words. (*He walks about a little longer.*) I can't help thinking that Miss Blair has indulged in—well, somewhat indiscreet confidences . . . and . . . (*He comes over and stands facing MAXWELL.*) Look here, Mr. Maxwell, we're men of the world. Is there any need to put the thing into words? The world is the world. Men are men, you know, and women are women. I'm very fond of Lillah; I've never been so fond of any woman in my life. One can't help being fond of her. Hang it all, I half suspect that you're a bit fond of her yourself.

MAXWELL (*rising, very sternly*). So fond of her that I really don't think I should have patience to continue this conversation any further.

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CLONBARRY. Oh, pray don't suppose for a moment that I have any wish to continue it.

MAXWELL (*who is now standing with his hand on the bell*). You are my guest, and you have reminded me several times that I am a man of the world. But I warn you frankly that, if by any means in my power—fair or unfair—I can dissuade Miss Blair from going back to London with you to-night, or having anything more whatever to do with you, I shall do so. It is possible that I may fail—women, as you very acutely observed just now, are women . . . but I've never yet in all my life failed to do anything that I tried to do. And I mean to try mighty hard this trip. (*He rings.*)

CLONBARRY. Well, we shall see.

KNOWLES *enters the room.*

KNOWLES. Did you ring, sir?

MAXWELL. Yes.

CLONBARRY (*taking his hat and coat, to KNOWLES*). Do you know where my man is?

KNOWLES (*stolidly*). I have no idea, sir.

CLONBARRY. You've no idea! Surely you must know.

KNOWLES (*stolidly*). I've no idea, sir.

CLONBARRY (*to MAXWELL*). Will you have the goodness to tell your servant to show me where my car has been put?

MAXWELL. Certainly. Knowles, show his lordship the coach-house.

KNOWLES. Yes, sir.

LILLAH, *now dressed for the road, enters the room, putting on her gloves.*

CLONBARRY. Oh! Ready?

LILLAH (*laconically*). Yes.

CLONBARRY. What about your baggage?

LILLAH. It's ready to come down.

*She turns to MAXWELL; he, however, volunteers no assistance.*

CLONBARRY. I suppose my man can manage it all right?

LILLAH (*after another glance at MAXWELL, as she buttons her glove*). I suppose so.

CLONBARRY *lingers for a moment, looking at MAXWELL*

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*in visible doubt and distrust. MAXWELL smiles placidly at him.*

CLONBARRY. Very well. I'll go and fetch the car round.

*He goes out. KNOWLES remains for a moment with his eyes on MAXWELL'S face. MAXWELL nods slightly, and KNOWLES goes out.*

MAXWELL (*after a moment, brushing his ear impatiently*). The flies are beginning to be an infernal nuisance.

*He rises and stands, his hands in his trousers pockets, looking at LILLAH gravely. She puts on her second glove carefully, apparently unconscious of his regard. She then goes over to the glass, gives the last finishing touches to her hat and her hair, and is about to draw down her veil.*

MAXWELL. No. Please don't pull down that thing.

LILLAH (*coldly*). Pardon?

MAXWELL. Please don't pull down your veil.

LILLAH (*more coldly*). Why not?

MAXWELL (*going a little towards her*). It hides your eyes, and I should like to be able to see them while I am talking to you.

LILLAH (*sharply*). Oh, please don't be absurd. (*She pulls down the veil, and proceeds to twist it conscientiously at the bottom.*) And I don't want you to talk to me. (*Turning towards him and speaking with cold deliberation.*) I suppose your vanity won't allow you to believe that . . . but it's true. I hate the very sound of your voice. I hate your face and your smile and your clothes, and the way you walk, and everything you do. I just want not to see you and not to hear you. Can you understand that? I did like you a little in the beginning . . . but . . . I've had too much of you, I suppose. You bore me now.

MAXWELL (*who has seated himself on the edge of the table, nodding good-humouredly*). Ah-ha.

LILLAH. And if you think I expect you to make pretty speeches to me (*She begins to take off the glove she has just put on*) or to go on with any nonsense . . . now . . . because I'm going away . . . you are really most ludicrously mistaken.

MAXWELL (*nodding as before*). Ah-ha.

LILLAH. I've known men like you before, you see.

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Men who believed (*having succeeded in getting the glove off, she begins to put it on again*) that every woman they met had designs of some kind or other on them, and who thought they were called upon to treat her with either deliberate rudeness or polite contempt.

MAXWELL. Why, you accused me a moment ago of wanting to make pretty speeches to you! I'm at a horrible disadvantage, you know. I *wish* that you would raise your veil.

LILLAH *raises her veil. They look at one another for a moment in silence.*

LILLAH. I want to know one thing. Did you really mean what you said to me out in the garden this afternoon?

MAXWELL. About . . . ?

LILLAH. About what you called my idea in staying here at The Barn? Did you mean that?

MAXWELL. I did. At the time.

LILLAH. You've changed your mind since?

MAXWELL. Yes.

LILLAH. Why?

MAXWELL. Well . . . I've had a talk with Clonbarry. I understand from what he said that, as I had begun to suspect, you have refused to marry him.

LILLAH. He told you that?

MAXWELL. Not in so many words . . . but . . . It is so, is it not? You *have* refused to marry him?

LILLAH. Yes. But that doesn't in the least alter the fact that you believed me capable of such a contemptible, underhand trick . . . that all this fortnight you've been regarding me as a designing, scheming, cunning little . . . adventuress . . . trading on your good nature in order to serve her own ends . . . in order to inveigle another man into marrying her.

MAXWELL. What on earth does it matter what I thought, or what I think?

LILLAH. Oh, nothing matters, of course. Except your books.

MAXWELL (*with a little impatience*). No . . . I'm serious. It doesn't matter a hang what I think. The thing that really matters is . . . what are you going to do . . . about Clonbarry?

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LILLAH. Do? I shall go back to London in his motor-car to-night . . . and next week I shall go to the devil in his yacht. Wind and weather permitting.

MAXWELL. That's the Lillah that frightens me. There are three distinct Lillahs, you know. There's the Lillah that God made . . .

LILLAH. "And the things in the Zoo,  
Hurroo, hurroo!"

MAXWELL. . . . The Lillah that God made; the Lillah that the world has made; and the Lillah that the Devil is trying to make. *That's* the Lillah that frightens me. (LILLAH *laughs derisively*.) You don't believe in a God or a Devil, perhaps?

LILLAH. God help those that don't help themselves, and the Devil take the hindmost. That's my religion, Mr. Maxwell, if I have any.

MAXWELL (*continuing with quiet determination*). Well . . . at any rate, there *are* three distinct Lillahs. The one that doesn't care a tuppenny damn whether she's good or bad, so long as she has a good time. The one that wants to be very good. And the one that may possibly be very bad. Isn't that so?

LILLAH (*feigning a yawn*). Oh, yes. Everybody's like that.

MAXWELL. Everybody's like that. And everybody has got to decide at some definite moment of their lives which of them's going to be top-dog. Personally, for instance, I decided that question at half-past three o'clock on the morning of the fourteenth of January, eighteen hundred and ninety-four . . . in an opium den in San Francisco.

LILLAH (*yawning again*). Really? Eighteen hundred and ninety-four? I had my first love-affair in eighteen ninety-four. I was twelve . . . and he was my music-master. Ah me, ah me! I wonder if he still drinks.

MAXWELL (*going on steadily*). The question is . . . the question is . . . which of the Lillahs is going to be top-dog?

LILLAH. Good heavens! you *are* dogged.

KNOWLES *enters the room, carrying on a salver a formidable-looking key.*

MAXWELL. Well, Knowles? All right?

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KNOWLES. Everything transpired as was anticipated, sir.

MAXWELL. Good. You may leave it there.

KNOWLES. Yes, Sir. (*He places the key on the table.*  
To LILLAH.) Mr. Maxwell's basket has come back from  
the laundry, Miss Lillah. Will you unpack it, or shall I?

LILLAH. Oh, I've resigned the reins of government,  
Knowles. (*Changing her mind.*) Well . . . bring it in  
here; it won't take a moment to run through it.

MAXWELL (*in protest*). Oh, no!

LILLAH. Yes.

KNOWLES. Very well, miss.

[*He goes out. There is a moment's silence.*]

MAXWELL. Why not marry Clonbarry?

LILLAH (*passionately*). I won't. That's out of the  
question.

MAXWELL. I think you're very foolish. The . . . the  
alternative is simply preposterous, you know.

KNOWLES *re-enters the room with a laundry-basket,*  
*which he deposits on a chair near the table.*

LILLAH. Thank you, Knowles.

[KNOWLES *goes out again.*]

MAXWELL. Preposterous. If you loved Clonbarry, I  
could understand. If you were without resources, I  
could understand. If you were not so obviously intended  
to be very good, I could understand. But . . . you  
don't love Clonbarry?

LILLAH. No.

MAXWELL. You earn, I presume, even at present, a  
fairly good salary?

LILLAH. Yes.

MAXWELL. You don't want to be wicked?

LILLAH. Not as a rule.

MAXWELL. Well, then, the only possible explanation  
remaining is that you feel bound, through some mis-  
guided sense of honour, to keep the . . . as I say . . .  
preposterous promise which you made to this man.

LILLAH. I made it. He helped me when I wanted  
help. He has given me what I wanted. I made the  
promise . . . and he expects me to keep it.

MAXWELL. Oh, let us put his expectations aside for  
the moment. Do you honestly believe, in your heart,  
that you are—or that you could be—bound to carry out

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such a promise? Look me straight in the face, and tell me . . . Do you believe that?

LILLAH. I do, and I don't. I don't know. I don't care. I really don't care what happens.

MAXWELL. You know what will happen, almost inevitably?

LILLAH. Oh, yes, I know. I suppose, once any good looks I have go . . . *(She makes a little gesture.)* However . . . I have decided. There's no good in preaching to me. *(Opening the laundry-basket.)* After all, there's nothing so very dreadful about it. He's a good fellow. *(With a laugh.)* I might do worse. I wonder if there is anything the matter with the car? *(After a moment.)* Why don't you get a car? *(Opening the laundry-book.)*

MAXWELL. Can't afford one.

LILLAH *(flippantly)*. What on earth does that matter? *(After a pause.)* You want some new undervests, too, by the way. *(Taking out a bundle of collars, and examining them carefully for iron-marks and other blemishes.)* I've got a ripping little car, you know . . . a Talbot. Cecil gave it to me as a birthday present. They've done the collars much better this week. Nine out of the fifteen are quite wearable. Why didn't you go in for the Church, Mr. Maxwell? *(Depositing the collars on the table and commencing on the shirts.)* With such a capacity for taking things seriously and such an admirable pulpit manner . . . another button-hole gone! . . . I'm sure you'd have been an archbishop before you were fifty. You might even have started a religion of your own . . . a blend of platonic flirtation and psychological vivisection . . . with an opium den at the rear for spiritual conversions. Whiffs for Satan. Saved while you wait. I'm sure you'd look perfectly sweet in a surplice, too, with the light from a stained glass window illuminating your ascetic profile. *(Counting the shirts, which she has piled on the table.)* Two, four, six, eight, ten, twelve, fourteen. *(Comparing with the list.)* Fourteen. *(MAXWELL has listened impassively. Going towards him, mockingly.)* There. It's not fair to make fun of you. If I had the least spark of grace in my composition, I should be unspeakably grateful to you for being so sorry for me. Poor, frail, misguided me!

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MAXWELL. This is the good time Lillah. An amusing little devil. Full of fun. Full of fun. (*Yawning.*) Almost as trying as her dear little friend Linda.

LILLAH. Fortunately, not quite so susceptible though. (*She returns to the basket.*) Besides . . . I shall have my work.

MAXWELL. Your work? At the theatre?

LILLAH. Yes. Perhaps you don't regard that as work? Your idea of work is writing novels to depress people? I assure you, it's much harder to amuse them.

MAXWELL. You . . . you are very keen about your work?

LILLAH (*imitating his speech in the afternoon*). Such as it is—so long as it pleases me . . . and the British Public . . . I shall dance and sing and wear three frocks a night. I wish you'd wear white pyjamas. They're ever so much the nicest. Oh, yes, I'm keen about my work. When I'm on the stage I'm as nearly happy as I suppose I ever shall be. Three.

*She has proceeded with pyjamas, socks and under-vests, checking them with the list.*

MAXWELL. But . . . if you married Clonbarry . . . I suppose he wouldn't ask you to give up your work, would he?

LILLAH (*sharply, straightening herself from the basket, for the moment unconscious of a bifurcated garment in her hand*). I've told you that that is out of the question. You may—(*perceiving the garment, and replacing it discreetly in the basket*) put that aside.

MAXWELL (*obstinately*). Why, why, why?

LILLAH. Why? (*Coming towards him.*) Because I don't love him.

MAXWELL. Oh! Love! Fiddlesticks! You'll never love anyone.

LILLAH. Oh, but I do.

MAXWELL. You do?

LILLAH. I've loved some one else . . . all my life.

MAXWELL. All your life?

LILLAH. I think so. Ah! a man. A clear, clean man.

MAXWELL (*after a pause*). If he is a man . . . Does he know about Clonbarry?

LILLAH. Yes. Oh, he's sorry for me and all that, you



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know . . . like you. He says just the things you say. Platitudes . . . kind, sensible, maddening platitudes. He's got no idea, of course, that they're maddening. He doesn't realise that . . . for me . . . he is everything . . . peace, happiness . . . (*with a gesture*) accomplishment . . . Heaven . . . God . . . everything. He's just a little angry with me . . . a little sorry for me . . . a little embarrassed by me . . . a little resentful at having anything to do with me. That's all. Just like you.

(*She returns to the basket.*)

MAXWELL (*after a moment, dejectedly*). Well . . . things being so, there seems nothing more for me to say. (*Going towards the table.*) I suppose I may as well let Clonbarry out. (*He picks up the key.*)

LILLAH (*her eyes on the key, sharply*). Out?

MAXWELL. Yes. He's been locked up in the coach-house for the last ten minutes or so.

LILLAH (*almost incredulous*). Locked up?

MAXWELL. Yes. I locked him up. Or, rather, I had him locked up. (*Casually.*) I wanted to speak to you, and he would have been in the way.

LILLAH (*icily*). Is that the key.

MAXWELL. Yes.

LILLAH. Give it to me.

MAXWELL. Certainly not.

LILLAH. If you don't I shall never speak to you again.

MAXWELL. It is improbable that an opportunity will occur. (*He goes towards the door.*) I shall let him out, myself. (*At the door, very earnestly.*) Stay here.

LILLAH. No.

MAXWELL. Crane and Lewis will be stopping on until the end of July. And I'm sure Lewis could persuade his mother to come down for a few weeks—as a sacrifice to Miss Hawes. I shan't be here much. I'm going up to Lancashire next week to work up some local colour. Do stay.

LILLAH. No, thank you.

MAXWELL. I . . . I've been thinking of getting a car for some time back. I'll run up to town to-morrow and see about it. (*Coming towards her.*) Stay, I beg of you. For a bit, at all events.

LILLAH. A motor car and a chaperon! You propose

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that I should cancel my contract with Arthur Hammersley . . . that I should practically throw away my career . . . for that's what it comes to . . . for a motor car and a chaperon! Have you nothing else to offer me, Mr. Maxwell?

MAXWELL (*after consideration*). You can have a maid . . . a nice, sensible, middle-aged maid.

LILLAH. No. Not good enough.

MAXWELL. What do you want?

LILLAH (*after a glance at him, very quietly*). Come here. (*He goes to her slowly*). (*Pulling his tie straight*). I don't want a sensible maid. I want a stupid man.

(*They look at one another in silence for a moment*.)

MAXWELL (*illuminated*). Take off that hat!

LILLAH. Oh, bother the hat! (*As he puts his arms about her*). Say you're sorry for all the horrible things you've said to me.

MAXWELL. Horrible things? I?

LILLAH (*imperiously*). Say you're sorry.

MAXWELL. I'm sorry.

LILLAH (*resigning herself*). Very well, then . . . here goes my career. (*She disappears into a most unbrotherly embrace*.)

MAXWELL. You villain! You little, little villain! (*Releasing her a little and holding her at arm's length*). You would have gone?

LILLAH. Well . . . why were you so nasty to me? Just think of all the lovely evenings we've wasted!

LILLAH *disappears again for a little while. He draws her over and into the armchair.*

LILLAH (*emerging*). I don't believe you love me at all. I believe this is just to keep me here. Isn't that all?

MAXWELL (*laying his cheek against hers*). That's all.

LILLAH. You know, I shall interfere horribly with your work. What about that horrid old book?

MAXWELL. The horrid old book can wait . . . until we come back.

LILLAH. Come back? (*Shyly*). From where?

MAXWELL. Paradise . . . or wherever it's usual to go under the circumstances. (*Further eclipse of LILLAH*.)

LILLAH (*still partially eclipsed*). Tell me . . . I want to know . . . when did you begin to like me?

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MAXWELL. The moment I saw you . . .

LILLAH. Really and truly?

MAXWELL. Really and truly. But I've detested you ever since.

LILLAH (*after a moment*). You silly boy! . . . Why didn't you tell me?

MAXWELL. I don't know. I hate liking anyone.

LILLAH. Yes, so do I. And I hate anyone to like me too much. That's one of the reasons why I like you. Remember that . . . won't you?

MAXWELL (*promptly*). All right. Get up.

LILLAH (*laughingly*). Oh, no . . . I can stand a little more of it. (*Renewed eclipse. Suddenly, horror-stricken.*) Good heavens!

MAXWELL. What's the matter?

LILLAH. Cecil. Lord Clonbarry. (*Jumping up.*) For goodness' sake, go and let him out. (*MAXWELL rings.*) Whatever am I to say to him? I'm sure he'll make a scene.

MAXWELL. It will be a very short one.

KNOWLES *comes in.*

MAXWELL (*handing KNOWLES the key*). I want you to open the coach-house door, Knowles.

KNOWLES. Yes, sir. [*He goes out.*]

MAXWELL. Perhaps you would prefer that I had a few words with him first?

LILLAH. No. You mustn't say anything to him. Promise me.

MAXWELL. Oh. . . . I can't promise that.

LILLAH. Promise me.

MAXWELL. I must say something to him.

LILLAH. Nothing angry or cruel?

MAXWELL. Lord! No.

LILLAH (*looking at him intently in silence for a moment*). Are you sure?

MAXWELL. Sure? You know. You said it yourself. It seems to me that I've been waiting for you all my life.

*The door opens, and CLONBARRY comes in slowly. He presents a deplorable appearance. His clothes and boots are white with a mixture of whitewash and dust; his cuffs, collar, and hands are filthy;*

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*a big black smear covers one cheek: his hair is tossed; and one leg of his trousers is badly torn at the knee. He stalks in in angry silence, looking very pale and perturbed in spirit.*

MAXWELL and LILLAH stare at him in amazement.

LILLAH (*after a moment, vainly endeavouring to repress a nervous titter*). Good gracious! What . . . what have you been doing?

CLONBARRY (*controlling himself*). Doing! (*To MAXWELL.*) You have played me a dirty trick, Mr. Maxwell. I hope you are satisfied with its success.

MAXWELL (*placidly*). Quite, thank you. (*With a smile.*) Though I had not intended it to be quite so dirty.

LILLAH, *unable to control herself any longer, laughs outright, and walks away towards the window, her shoulders shaking.*

CLONBARRY (*glaring after her*). I'm glad you find it amusing. I'm bound to say that my sense of humour is not so highly developed. [*MAXWELL leaves the room.*

LILLAH. I'm awfully sorry . . . but I really can't help it . . . You . . . you look so funny. How on earth did you contrive to get yourself into such a mess?

CLONBARRY. I'll tell you by-and-by. Have your things been brought down?

LILLAH. No.

MAXWELL (*returning, with a clothes-brush*). Won't you allow me to give you a brush?

CLONBARRY. Thank you, no.

LILLAH. Yes, you must. You look too awful. (*To MAXWELL.*) Give me that.

MAXWELL *gives her the brush. When she approaches*

CLONBARRY, *he snatches it angrily from her hand and pitches it on the ground. LILLAH, stiffening at once, draws back from him.*

MAXWELL (*sternly*). What the devil do you . . . ?

LILLAH (*quietly*). Kenneth!

(*MAXWELL turns away from CLONBARRY.*)

LILLAH. I'm afraid that this interview shows a tendency to become embarrassing. I think it is better to tell you at once that I am not going back to town with you. I shall stay here.

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CLONBARRY (*whose eyes have been fastened on LILLAH*). Oh! (*A pause.*) Oh! (*He makes his way to the nearest chair, and sits down in it limply.*) Forgive me for a minute, will you? . . . My head is a bit dizzy. I got rather a bad fall out there.

MAXWELL (*serious*). I'm sorry to hear that. (*Going over to CLONBARRY.*)

CLONBARRY (*weakly*). Yes . . . I . . . I tried to climb up to the little window in the roof . . . and I slipped.

MAXWELL. Would you care for anything?

CLONBARRY. Well . . . thanks . . . if it's not too much trouble. I feel a bit shaky.

[MAXWELL goes out quickly.]

CLONBARRY, *who has never taken his eyes off LILLAH, looks at her intently for a moment.*

CLONBARRY (*in a low voice*). You love him?

LILLAH (*almost inaudibly*). Yes.

CLONBARRY (*after a pause*). I knew. I guessed it all along.

LILLAH. I shall write to Mr. Hammersley to-morrow, asking him to release me from the contract. (*After a pause.*) Are you angry with me?

CLONBARRY (*with a shrug*). No. What's the use? You never cared a damn about me, I know. (*A pause.*) I think I've sprained my wrist.

LILLAH. Will you let me bandage it for you?

CLONBARRY. No. I wish you'd lend me a pin, though.

LILLAH. A pin? (*She unfastens a little pin brooch.*)

MAXWELL re-enters the room, followed by KNOWLES, who carries a tray, on which are a tantalus, siphon, glasses.

MAXWELL. Irish or Scotch?

CLONBARRY. Irish.

KNOWLES goes out. MAXWELL fixes up a stiff drink.

MAXWELL (*with his hand on the siphon*). Perhaps you prefer Perrier?

CLONBARRY. Oh, thanks . . . that's quite all right. (*He takes the glass and swallows half its contents.*)

LILLAH stoops down and deftly repairs the trouser with her brooch.

LILLAH (*as she rises*). Better?

CLONBARRY (*looking into his glass moodily*). Well . . .

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I suppose I must wish you both good luck. (*He swallows the remaining contents of his glass and rises.*) Your methods of warfare are unorthodox, Mr. Maxwell, but your whisky is beyond reproach.

LILLAH, *having picked up the clothes-brush, approaches him with the intention of brushing his coat.*

(*Taking a step towards her, passionately.*) Lillah!

LILLAH (*retreating a step towards MAXWELL*). No.

CLONBARRY. Give me a chance. Marry me. Give me a chance. My God . . . you know I can't do without you.

(LILLAH *shakes her head and retreats another step.*)

You won't?

LILLAH (*quietly*). No, Cecil.

[*He turns on his heel and goes slowly out.*]

LILLAH (*to MAXWELL*). Go and see him off. Poor boy . . . It's hard on him. I'm sorry for him. Make him let you brush his clothes.

MAXWELL. All right, little woman.

*He takes the clothes-brush and goes out after CLONBARRY.*

*The light has now almost completely failed, and the room is in semi-darkness. LILLAH, after a moment of meditation, begins to take off her hat.*

KNOWLES *enters the room.*

LILLAH. Those things are all right, Knowles. You'll see that they are aired before you go upstairs, won't you?

KNOWLES. Yes, miss. (*There is a little silence.*) You're staying with us, Miss Lillah?

LILLAH. Yes.

KNOWLES (*after a pause*). I hope you won't think it a liberty, miss . . . but Mr. Crane and Mr. Lewis have been lurking in my pantry like assassins for the last quarter of an hour.

LILLAH. Tell them I want them.

KNOWLES. Yes, miss.

MAXWELL (*coming in*). Light, Knowles . . . light.

KNOWLES (*cheerfully*). Light, sir? . . . yes, sir . . . yes, sir . . . half a moment, sir. [*He goes out hastily.*]

MAXWELL. Where are you?

LILLAH (*going towards him*). Here. (*He puts his arms about her.*) (*After a little.*) Well?

MAXWELL. He's gone . . . I think I'm rather sorry

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for him, too . . . He took it like a man. However . . . he's gone.

LILLAH. And we're here . . . you and I.

MAXWELL. You and I. And I know *I'm* much too happy to think about anyone else in the wide, wide world. All the same, when we're married, you mustn't have pins sticking out in such inconvenient places, Baby.

LILLAH. And you must shave yourself twice a day, you lazy boy! Oh!

*The door opens and KNOWLES enters, carrying a lamp, the light of which reveals CRANE and LEWIS following in his wake. The three come forward; KNOWLES turns aside to place the lamp on the piano. CRANE and LEWIS come forward a few paces further, then halt. The four friends look at one another, LILLAH and MAXWELL smiling (his arm is still about her waist), CRANE and LEWIS preternaturally solemn.*

CRANE (after a silent moment). This is no place for us, Billy. (He takes LEWIS by the arm.) Oh, Maxwell, Maxwell . . . that you should come to this!

*They turn in affected grief and go towards the door.*

MAXWELL, laughing, runs after them, slips an arm into one of theirs, and brings them back to LILLAH.

MAXWELL (as LILLAH holds out her hands to CRANE and LEWIS). Now, I ask you . . . is it my fault?

THE END.











